LANGTON

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EARLY
DAYS IN
UPPER
CANADA

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John Langton and His Principal Correspondent

From a miniature painted in 1833

EARLY DAYS IN UPPER CANADA

LETTERS OF JOHN LANGTON

from the Backwoods of Upper Canada and the Audit Office of the Province of Canada

EDITED BY W A LANGTON

206347/13 10/26

TORONTO THE MACMILLAN COMPANY OF
CANADA LIMITED AT ST MARTIN'S HOUSE
1926

From a miniature painted in 1833

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PREFACE

During the first four years after my father came out to Canada he wrote home to his family circle in England a series of letters which form the first part of this collection. These letters were carefully copied by his father, to whom they were chiefly addressed, and were bound in book form. They have thus been preserved in their entirety. The reason for copying them is suggested by the only surviving original letter. At that time letters were sent without envelopes and, as postage was charged by the sheet and was expensive, long letters like this which survives, were so diligently "crossed" in the writing that they were difficult to read or refer to. When my father's family came to Canada to join him this book of copied letters, comprising the letters from 1833 to 1837, was left behind in England with William Langton the elder brother. He copied from the occasional letters my father continued to write to him portions of special interest such as the extracts about Lumbering and the Clergy Reserves, but preserved the original manuscript of the letters about university affairs and the audit of the public accounts.

It was not until more than ten years after my father's death that his letters were brought out from their place of preservation and placed in my hands.

The letters concerning university affairs and the public accounts have been published in the Canadian Historical Review, and were annotated by Mr. W. Stewart Wallace, the editor of the Review, whose notes have been preserved.

The illustrations of Peterborough and the Back Lakes were made by Anne Langton, after 1837 when she came out from England. The views of Peterborough can hardly have been made before the years 1852-55, during which John Langton and his family lived in Peterborough. They are either exact reproductions of her drawings, though much reduced, or, where the originals were too worn for reproduction, are copies traced from her outlines, which were in ink, and finished in imitation of the originals.

W. A. LANGTON

ILLUSTRATIONS

Thomas Langton and John Langton Frontispiece
Thomas Langton and His Family Facing xiv
The Family Party at Blythe in 1840 xv
Peterborough from the West " xxxix
Peterborough from White's Tavern " 5
Alexander McAndrew " 61
Fenelon Falls with the Mill " 72
Peterborough from the South " 140
Blythe, the Original Settlement " 150
Blythe at the Present Time " 154
View of Blythe After Addition in 1841 " 185
The Church at Fenelon Falls " 192
View from Blythe, Looking Towards Fenelon Falls " 200
The House in Peterborough " 212
William Langton " 217
John Langton 1856 " 277
John Langton Aetat 79 " 302

P
F
L
M
P

CUTS IN THE TEXT

Sketch Map of First Explorations	14
Plan of Cottage	53
Interior Views of Cottage	[illegible]
Map of the Rapids at Bomaysoon	173
Plan of Blythe	184

B

BIOGRAPHICAL SKETCH OF JOHN LANGTON

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BIOGRAPHICAL SKETCH

John Langton, the writer of these letters, was born at Blythe Hall, near Ormskirk, Lancashire, on April 6th 1808. His father, Thomas Langton, who was a youngest son, was, for his portion, sent to Russia at the age of seventeen, to learn business in an English mercantile house at Riga, on the understanding of a partnership being provided for him on attaining his majority. As he was born in 1770, he cannot have been a partner for more than ten years when, at the beginning of the last century, as Europe was no longer a safe place for Englishmen, he returned to England with sufficient fortune to live comfortably without active participation in business. The fortune was invested in a partnership with an elder brother in his business in Liverpool. Neither of the partners lived in Liverpool; management of the business was in the hands of a son of the elder brother.

Thomas Langton, having married in 1802 and bought Blythe Hall soon after, devoted himself to farming its lands and teaching his children grammar and Latin. He seems to have been of an inventive, if not speculative, disposition. The emigration later of his youngest son John to Canada was probably of his instigation. Allusions in these letters indicate that he burned to have a hand in the contrivances of life in the backwoods, and he finally came out there to live—or, as it turned out, to die.

At this earlier period, when his attention was given to the education of his children, he was so deeply impressed by the system of Pestalozzi that in 1815, when the final defeat of Napoleon opened up Europe again to travel, he decided to take his family to Switzerland to put the education of his children, William, Anne and John, in Pestalozzi's hands. So Blythe was let, and soon after the battle of Waterloo they left England and proceeded in a leisurely manner to Yverdon, where Pestalozzi had his school. There Mr Langton took a house, and his two elder children were taught at home by tutors from Pestalozzi's Institute, while John, aged eight, went to the Institute. After two years at Yverdon it was thought that a milder climate was necessary for the eldest son. For the next three years therefore the family lived in the south of France, Italy and Germany, receiving from tutors an ordinary English education, and acquiring also facility in speaking the languages of the countries in which they resided.

In the year 1820 they returned to England, because of anxiety about the conditions of the business in which the family fortune was invested. Whether any one was to blame, or whether it was merely the consequences of the state of the world after the Napoleonic wars, the business was much contracted and was no longer so profitable. In 1826 came a commercial crisis which decided Mr Langton, for fear of involving his creditors, to wind up the business by private arrangement with them. There was no bankruptcy, but there was henceforth poverty. Had not an aunt come to the rescue, John, who was already entered at Cambridge, could not have continued there. He took his degree in 1829, and after some uncertainty and experiment in Liverpool emigrated to Canada in 1833, when he was twenty-five. His father tried, in more than one way, to restore to some extent his fortunes; but he was of the wrong age, and perhaps not of the right kind. In 1837, after much debate, he joined his son in Canada, with his wife, his daughter Anne, and his wife's sister, Miss Currer. The eldest son, William, who was now manager of Sir Benjamin Heywood's bank at Manchester, remained in England and became a distinguished banker, the creator of the Manchester and Salford Bank.

The following letters give an account of the settlement on Sturgeon Lake, near Fenelon Falls, on land which was afterwards called Blythe Farm. The first series of letters ceased with the arrival in Canada, in 1837, of the persons to whom they had been written.

The family life at Blythe Farm was of course monotonous and of private interest only, but the records shew that it was both comfortable and happy; and, in consequence of the necessity of hospitality where there were no inns, Blythe, in spite of its remoteness, was often enlivened by society.

Thomas Langton had died early in 1838. To the family, then consisting of his mother, aunt and sister, John in 1845 added a wife, Lydia, the daughter of the Rev. James Hartley Dunsford of *The Beehive* on Sturgeon Lake. In 1847 his mother and aunt both died, and the tie that held him to the farm was broken. He had been experimenting before this in the square timber lumbering of that time, about which there are some letters included in this collection. Later he invested money in some mills near Peterborough. This took him to Peterborough to live. He became Warden of the county for some years. From 1851 to 1855 he represented in the Legislature, first the united

counties of Peterborough and Victoria, and afterwards the county of Peterborough.

In 1855 he was appointed Auditor of public accounts. This involved a move to Toronto. Soon after arrival there, the Governor General, Sir Edmund Head, appointed him to the Senate of the University of Toronto, and in the following year he was elected Vice-Chancellor.

The Audit Office was new, and its methods and machinery were to be created; hence the interest attaching to the letters about the work which are included in this volume. Addressed to his elder brother, who was by this time a person of large financial and executive experience, they may be regarded as part of the work of creation, a process of arranging and testing ideas by communicating them to a person of judgment in such matters. Confederation, with the accompanying need of co-ordinating the accounts of the provinces, enlarged the field of work. He became then Auditor General and was also the Deputy Minister of Finance. The combined offices he continued to carry on until he was superannuated in 1878. He was then seventy and lived in Toronto for sixteen years longer, dying on March 19, 1894.

UPPER CANADA
IN EARLY DAYS

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A SKETCH OF CONDITIONS IN UPPER CANADA WHEN THE WRITER OF THE LETTERS CAME OUT FROM ENGLAND

For the better understanding of the letters which follow, it seems desirable to put together information derived from writers of the period and other sources which will help us to realize what Upper Canada was like in 1833, when John Langton came to the country.

About that time the idea of emigration to Canada had taken hold of young men in England and Scotland. Land ownership was the lure. The Canadian Government had spread its advertisements in the old country offering free land to some and cheap land to all; and land was still the Englishman's idea of property. For a few hundred pounds to own as many acres as his ancestors seemed a great chance to many a young man for whom there was but little chance at home. When the purchase of a few hundred acres of uncleared land was made, the family at home spoke of it as an estate.

It did not take long to convince immigrants of this type that an estate in Upper Canada was not the same sort of thing as an estate in England. Even those who realized that the value of the Canadian estate lay in the future felt little ground for satisfaction, for there was not much promise of prosperity in sight in Upper Canada. The current conditions were crude, and there seemed to be no machinery for improving them. The country was too exclusively agricultural; property consisted mainly of land. There was great need of industries as well; both to make employment for some of the immigrants who were better suited for that kind of life, and also to provide commodities within the country, so that the inhabitants need not buy everything from Great Britain and the United States.* Capital was needed to promote such industries, but there was no capital in the country in large amounts, that is to say there were no capitalists; and there were not enough banks to make available for such purposes the reserves of money that immigrants brought with them, which in the aggregate must have amounted to large sums. In the year 1831-32 there were 300,000 sovereigns deposited in the Bank of Upper Canada by new arrivals.† This bank, which was then the only bank, was said by William Lyon Mackenzie in an article in his *Colonial Advocate* to be "virtually under the control of the executive;" and in the same article he charges the government with discouraging manufactures, "as interfering with the main object of a colony, to wit, the promotion of the trade, and enlargement of the patronage of the mother country." Whether this charge was true or not, it is a fact, as has been pointed out by Professor Mavor,‡ that the immediate consequence of responsible government, when it came, was the industrialization of the province. In the meantime commodities were imported, and the specie that for this purpose flowed out of the country into the United States or flowed out of the province to Montreal and Quebec in payment for British goods did not return. The only thing Upper Canada had to sell was flour, pork and other produce, of which things the United

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* Mavor, *An Economic History of Canada* (MS.)

† Magrath, *Authentic Letters from Upper Canada*, p. 198.

‡ *Op. cit.*

States had a superabundance and Lower Canada had enough.* Upper Canada was therefore reduced to the primitive condition of exchange by barter, a cumbrous process, which must have made saving difficult or impossible, and was credited by Howison with relaxing the moral fibre of both parties in a transaction. The articles exchanged had not a fixed value like money. The value of a farm labourer's monthly wage of thirteen or fourteen bushels of wheat (the equivalent of £3, the monthly wage of a man)† depended upon the quality of the wheat, and also, no doubt, upon conditions of storage, transport and the character of the farmer from whom it was due. It was the business of the store-keeper to secure his own position by rating the value of the wheat as low as possible, while the labourer's duty to his wife and family required him in self-defence to exaggerate its value. To get the advantage in a barter acquired thus a character of right-doing which caused Howison to despair of the honesty of Canadians. And if in private transactions it was thought no harm to "take advantage," much less was it wrong to cheat the government in the matter of taxes, for these had to be paid in specie which it was not in mortals to command. Even the assessors lost their strictness in the face of an insurmountable difficulty.‡ All this was of course a great hindrance to progress in the country. On the whole the producer suffers most in a system of barter, and agricultural improvements which required the purchase of equipment were indefinitely delayed. The farmer's motto "Never buy anything, no matter how necessary it is," must have originated at this time.

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* Howison, *Sketches of Upper Canada*, p. 127.
† *Ibid.* p. 249.
‡ *Ibid.* p. 258.

As bad a handicap to the farmer, or worse, was the state of the roads. The only available material for making roads, as for everything else, was wood, which did not last long. The roads were soon an alternation of degenerate corduroy and mud-holes up to the axle. If the gaps in the corduroy were less than the diameter of the front wheel, it was possible to go on, by lowering gently each pair of wheels in turn into the gap and pulling them gently out again. If the gaps in the corduroy were too great, there was nothing for it but to fell a tree and fill the gaps—no one travelled without his axe. Sometimes Mrs Jameson found that the mud-holes were made less abysmal by boughs of oak spread over them; which answered the immediate purpose but were apt to prove a trap for those who came after.*

There is no easier way of sinking money in a new country than in making roads and keeping them in repair, and the credit of Canada (then, as Professor Mavor says, "a remote and little known colony") was not strong; but Mackenzie in the *Colonial Advocate* thought something should have been done. "Our roads", he said, "are in general in a wretched condition, and the situation of many of the back settlers so miserable as to render them objects of pity and commiseration in the eyes of any government other than a colonial one." The natural waterways of the country were, of course, a great advantage, and the Welland Canal was already built. The Rideau Canal was also finished in 1831, but its purpose was military rather than commercial. The only other effort then being made in the way of improving the water communication of Upper Canada was the construction of locks at

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* Jameson, *Winter Studies and Summer Rambles*, Vol. II, p. 118

Bobcaygeon, mentioned in these letters and interesting as a first instalment of the Trent Valley Canal which, after eighty four years, we have seen completed in 1918.

Of railways nobody yet thought. It does not seem to have occurred to the writer of these letters or to others at that time, that there was any mode of transport in prospect for Canada better than canals connecting the great lakes. Yet in 1837, four years after his arrival, he writes that Michigan, just made a State, was incurring a debt of $5,000,000 to commence constructing three great railroads from one end of the State to the other. He says, however—'This system of going ahead seems to have answered in the States, but I doubt whether there is sufficient spirit amongst us to carry the system through.'

The contrast with the United States was always in the minds of people in those days. It was only necessary to cross the border into the United States to see bustle and progress in the place of the apparent stagnation of Canada, and it was natural to attribute the difference in the life of the two countries to the difference in the forms of government. Thus as W. L. Grant says,* 'A desire for American Institutions grew up—that it did not grow more widely is the remarkable thing.' There was, of course, plenty of prejudice against republicanism among the U. E. Loyalists who had inherited an abhorrence of the United States government, and there was also, quite apart from political feeling, a general dislike of the 'Yankees,' as they were always called, who had migrated to Canada. These had come over in large numbers. They did not usually take up land. They preferred some occupation in which their hands were nearer the pockets of the public. To keep a store or a tavern suited them best. We can imagine the opportunities afforded to a sharp storekeeper in the bartering period when, as Howison says, with a sympathy somewhat more than generous, "the merchants are obliged to impoverish and oppress the people by exorbitant charges." Of the American tavern-keepers, the testimony of all travellers is the same; as little accommodation as possible was given, and that with the rudest of manners. The truth is that these Americans were adventurers and had the spirit of adventurers rather than of citizens. A travelling American clockmaker, to whom Mrs. Traill complained of the manners of his countrymen, explained the matter by saying that the Americans in Canada "were for the most part persons of no reputation, many of whom had fled to the Canadas to escape from debt or other disgraceful conduct; and added, 'It would be hard if the English were to be judged as a nation by the convicts of Botany Bay.'"*

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* *History of Canada*, p. 194.

Such being the character of the "Yankees" in Upper Canada, they served a useful purpose to those who preferred the British character as warnings that i might be safer to plod on with their country as it was, and hope for improvement. The backwardness of Canada was, as a matter of fact, due chiefly to the form of government, but only one change was needed—an executive which was responsible to the electors—to make the form of government as practical as that of the United States for the development of the coun-try. To do this was really impossible so long as the Colonial Office was considered to be the ultimate auth-ority for all acts of government. The *corpus* of the

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* Traill, *Backwoods of Canada*, p. 203.

Government of Upper Canada* consisted of, first, the Lieutenant Governor, appointed by the Crown, i.e. the Colonial Office; secondly an Executive Council of seven, of which three members, the Chief Justice of Upper Canada, the Bishop of Quebec, and the Archdeacon of York, were *ex-officio* and four were the direct appointment of the Lieutenant Governor; thirdly a Legislative Council of seventeen members "summoned" by the Lieutenant Governor and his Executive; and, fourthly, a Legislative Assembly of fifty members representing counties and towns.

The Executive Council were only advisers of the Lieutenant Governor, not a cabinet responsible to the representatives of the people; and the Lieutenant Governor was only the local adviser of the Colonial Office. As Lord Durham afterwards said,† the Lieutenant Governor did not even really represent the Crown; he was merely a subordinate of the British executive, receiving his orders from the Secretary of State, and responsible to him for his conduct. However, "the Governor," as he is always called in these letters, though but a subordinate of the Colonial Office, was the subordinate on the spot, and, in his own sphere, seems to have been a somewhat despotic person. His accredited functions gave him much political power in the way of the appointment and control of legislators and the occasions of their meeting; but he exercised also much influence apart from the law. Sir John Colborne, who was the Governor in 1833, was trying to steer settlers towards the lands of the Canada Company. His visit later to the settlement on Sturgeon

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* The Constitutional Act of 1791 is the principal source of information for the following paragraphs on this subject.

† Lord Durham's Report.

Lake (the settlement with which these letters are chiefly concerned), and his approval of what he saw, raised high hopes in the young men of the lake that he would help their fortunes. They wanted settlers to be sent to their district, and they knew the Governor could send them.

With all these powers and activities the Governor had no deciding power in legislation. An Act to which he had given his assent had still to be approved by the Colonial Office, and two years were allowed for the officials there to make up their mind about it and submit it to the Sovereign with their opinion. When accepted or rejected, the Governor was notified of the result, and proclaimed the Act to be law or nullified it, as the case might be. This was a slow process for a growing country; but those days were slow to an extent that we have difficulty in imagining. There was no means of communication except by mail or messenger, over such roads as we have just been considering. There must have been a certain amount of liveliness along "the front," as the shores of the great lakes were called. Shirreff speaks of steamers, in York harbour, arriving and departing almost hourly*. That, of course, would be only in the summer, and behind the front there was nothing of the kind; life was remote, solitary and slow. The great rebellion of 1837 was begun and finished before it was heard of in Bobcaygeon—now three hours away by train, less by motor, and only a moment by telephone. Two years would not therefore seem to the early settlers of Canada so long as we think it would. Nor did they think in the same way as we should of their position of dependence on the will of the home government. Gov ernment by the governed was not an idea of the popular mind, and perhaps it was as well, for not only was the popular mind not very well educated just then—Mr. B., a native Canadian, told Mrs. Jameson that not one person in seventy in the back townships could read or write*—but it was also somewhat disordered in its thinking by arrival in a new country where every man could become a landed proprietor, that is to say, according to the immigrants' old world ideas, a member of a privileged class. There are numberless stories of the disturbing effect of this supposed sudden rise in the world. Sir John Beverley Robinson, the Chief Justice of Upper Canada at this time, was probably right in his generation in saying† that it was unsafe to trust the government of the country to the unskilled and ill-educated rabble, easily led by demagogues who in those days were republican enthusiasts, and were the more dangerous because, though the majority of the country were loyal to the rather trying home government, they were indifferent to public affairs, and anxious only to attend to their business.

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* *A Tour through North America*, p. 105.

There was a recognizable official class, mainly but not entirely of U. E. Loyalist descent, who were of the same way of thinking as the Chief Justice. They accepted the offices of government as theirs, and with them the emoluments thereof, but they accepted also the duties of office, and one of the duties was to guard the country from less honourable men. Like Sir John Beverley Robinson they feared the multitude. They were the aristocrats but they were not wealthy, and it is to their credit that no accusation has been made of their using the power in their hands to enrich themselves.[*] This influential circle, as described in narratives of visitors to Canada in the thirties, seems to have practised English social distinctions in an accentuated form,[†] as if they were afraid of the relaxing influence of a new country. Mrs. Jameson said, "Toronto is like a fourth or fifth rate provincial town, with the pretensions of a capital city."[‡] She found there "the worst evils of our old and most artificial social system, with none of its *agrémens*, and none of its advantages."

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* *Op. cit.* I, 84.

† Grant, *op. cit.*, p. 185.

Her account of Toronto, as it had come to be called shortly before she arrived there, is as it appeared in winter—"Most strangely mean and melancholy. A little ill-built town on low land, at the bottom of a frozen bay, with one very ugly church, without tower or steeple; some government offices, built of staring red brick, in the most tasteless, vulgar style imaginable; and the grey, sullen, wintry lake, and the dark gloom of the pine forest bounding the prospect; such seems Toronto to me now."[§] The tall pine forest and sullen lake were visible boundaries; it was a small place. Mrs. Stewart[**] describes it as "sunk down in a little amphitheatre cut out of the great, black forest." Samuel Thompson writing of its dimensions when he arrived there in September 1833[††] describes it as an oblong bounded by Queen, King, York and Church Streets. South of King Street was the Bay bordered by trees on a reedy shore and echoing to the sound of the duck shooter's gun. There was not much movement or life in the streets. There were some good shops and a market frequented by the smaller householders. People of means, Mrs. Jameson says,* were supplied from their own farms or by arrangement with people they knew or employed. The only market vegetable was potatoes. Beef, mutton and pork were there—not good, Mrs. Jameson says, except the pork, which was corn fed. They had, however, fish all the winter as well as in summer, black bass and whitefish caught through holes in the ice. There were sea salmon in the lakes in those days, as far up as the Falls of Niagara. T. W. Magrath, who lived at Erindale on the Credit River, about nine miles west of Toronto, caught salmon within twenty yards of his front door "as fine as I ever met in Ireland, as firm and full of curd as within ten miles of the sea instead of five hundred." Game was always to be had, venison and wild fowl of many kinds, ducks and geese, partridge, snipe and woodcock. Quail were also then caught in immense numbers near Toronto. The passenger pigeons still came in undiminished numbers. They are mentioned more than once in these letters. They seem to have compared with the locust of the east in destructiveness. Howison records† that in Ohio, where they were more numerous than in Canada, "Wilson, the ornithologist, saw a flock of these birds which extended, he judged, more than a mile in breadth, and continued to pass over his head at the rate of one mile in a minute during four hours, thus making the whole length about 240 miles."

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[*] Wallace, *The Family Compact* pp. 2-3 and 26.

[†] Grant, op. cit. p. 134.

[‡] *Op. cit.* I 190

[§] *Ibid.* I, 2.

[**] Stewart, *Our Forest Home* p. 13.

[††] Thompson, *Reminiscences* p. 39.

Among the shops were two book shops, one with a circulating library. There would be nothing very new to be found in them, for books published in England took two years to reach Toronto* People who did read in those days were not so much on the look-out for new books as we are. The small fry of literature had hardly made their appearance. It was leviathans like Scott and Byron who wrote the best sellers; and Fenimore Cooper's works (alluded to in these letters) represented the exciting type of novel. A gentleman's library contained chiefly standard works, and probably a bookseller's stock was mostly of this kind. If a Toronto bookseller was asked for a book that was not in stock he always said, according to Mrs. Jameson, "that it could be sent for to Buffalo."† In Buffalo which had then a population of 20,000, about twice that of Toronto, she found several good bookshops.

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* *Op. cit.* I, 267.
† *Op. cit.* p. 176.

For current reading matter there were chiefly the American reprints of English magazines. There were also the newspapers, not containing much news but filled chiefly with paragraphs on subjects of general interest copied from English and American papers, with extracts from books and magazines and a summary of political events.‡ There were about forty newspapers in Upper Canada,§ but there was not much more to be learned from the whole forty than from one, for they had a way of copying from one another the passages which were copied in the first place. The newspapers were mostly weeklies. There was no daily paper until in 1836, the *Royal Standard* was published in Toronto.**

There must have been some leaven of learning in the society of York, because of the presence of King's

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* Jameson, *op. cit.* I, 27.
† *Ibid.* II, 31.
‡ *Ibid.* I, 271-2.
§ *Ibid.* I, 272.
** Grant, *op. cit.* p. 180.

College and Upper Canada College. The latter is always spoken of with pity by visitors of those days—"it does not appear that much good has yet arisen from it," it had "a system of education which appears narrow and defective"*—but it was staffed by graduates of Oxford and Cambridge. King's College, though its charter dates from 1827, was not active until, in 1843, it became the University of Toronto. The President of King's College was Archdeacon Strachan, an old schoolmaster, and no doubt a man of learning. Mrs. Jameson says that Archdeacon Strachan and Chief Justice Robinson had "very pretty libraries."†

For the greater part of Toronto society, books were probably not so important as other things. We have a record of the conversation at a social gathering.‡ The ladies' topics were:—marriages ~~and births~~, lamentations on want of servants and state of the roads, last letters from England, character of new neighbours come to settle. The gentlemen's topics were:—crops and clearings, lumber, price of wheat, road mending, deer shooting, logburning, etc." and any man's heart must go out to them with envy. This conversation, it is true, was held at Woodstock not at Toronto, but Woodstock was a stronghold of the well-to-do English immigrants. It was there that Admiral Van Sittart had his house, a log house of many additions, extending over the ground in all directions and looking, it was said, more like an African village than a house; but inside it was full of *objets d'art* from Italy.

Whatever the character of their conversation people saw much of one another in those days. Even in the backwoods there was constant exercise of hospitality, and little was thought of distance or difficulty. People were known to come to a ball at Government House, Toronto, from distances of fifty, a hundred and even two hundred miles.* The young men at Sturgeon Lake, with whom these letters are concerned, would go down to a ball at Peterborough, over thirty miles away by water, and when they had danced all night, to let the ladies have daylight for their drive home, would row back next day to their farms. The lack of good servants, or of any servants, was made up for by the willingness of the guests to help in the preparations for the feast. The afternoon might be spent in useful occupation, the ladies very busy in the kitchen, while the young men painted a boat before the windows within the range of conversation as well as of sight; and at the proper time all withdrew, to come together again at table, clean, and on special occasions in evening dress.

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* Jameson, *Op. cit.* I, 27.
† *Ibid.* I, 271.
‡ *Ibid.* II, 120.

The lack of servants was a serious trouble, perhaps greater in the towns than upon the farms. The daughter of a small settler was often available for domestic service with a richer neighbour when she was not wanted at home; but such service was apt to be fluctuating. In the towns the persons offering for domestic service were chiefly the lower class of Irish immigrants who, having been accustomed only to want and dirt, were not of much use for producing cleanliness and comfort. The wages at the house of Vice-Chancellor Jameson were $8 a month for the man, $6 for the cook and $4 for the housemaid, but Mrs. Jameson says that good, experienced servants would get more.† People

however, emigrated to make their fortunes, not to become domestic servants. Moreover, that condition had more the appearance of servitude in this wonderful new land where people were addressed as "sir" or spoken of as "gentlemen," and where no well dressed person expected less well dressed persons to touch their hats when speaking to him. This equality of consideration, if not actually confused with equality of position, seemed to indicate its near approach and bred disinclination to any kind of domestic service, where the distinction between him that serveth and him that sitteth at meat is well defined.

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* Jameson, op. cit. I, 203.
† Ibid. I, 250.

We hear from all travellers of the rude manners adopted by the newly arrived in this free country, by Scots and Irishmen particularly, less so by the English. Howison* tells of two Scotchmen whom he saw in Montreal just after their arrival in Canada, and saw again in Kingston not long after. At Montreal they took off their hats; at Kingston they nodded with easy familiarity. On the latter occasion he addressed them by their Christian names as to their prospect of getting employment. "This gentleman," said one, pointing to his companion who was a bricklayer, "has been offered four shillings a day at Prescott, but his good lady does not like the place." Mrs. Traill has a similar story in her *Backwoods of Canada*.† The exhibit in this case was a young Scotchman, engineer of a steamer, who was "surly and almost insolent" when Lieut. Traill asked him to explain the working of the engine. Instead of doing as he was asked he seated himself on the bench close beside Mrs. Traill and explained to her that one of the advantages of this country was that he was not obliged to take off his hat when he spoke to people ("meaning," Mrs. Traill says, "persons of our degree"), and, besides, he could go and take his seat beside any gentleman or lady either, and think himself to the full as good as them. Mrs. Traill suggested that he over rated the privilege, because he could not oblige the lady or gentleman to share his opinion of himself or to remain seated beside him—which she, rather unkindly, did not. Lieutenant Traill then took up the conversation and, without giving ground, managed to convince the man that he might explain the working of his engine without losing the fruits of emigration. "What makes a gentleman?" said the man in the course of the argument; "I'll thank you to answer me that!" "Good manners and good education," was the reply; "A rich man, or a high born man, if he is rude, ill-mannered, and ignorant, is no more a gentleman than yourself." The interest of this story lies almost as much in the Traills' unhesitating confidence of their superiority as in the man's misconception of his position. Oil was oil and water was water in those days; and not only could the two never mix but one lay naturally on top of the other so naturally that, though social degrees play often an important part in fiction of the period, they do not seem to be noticed by the writers as any more peculiar than that the sun should shine by day and the moon by night. It is, curiously enough, from narratives of life in this country, where the process of emulsification had begun, that we realise best what the old order of things must have been in England.

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* *Op. cit.* p. 92.
† Pp. 83-85.

This exaggerated idea of the privileges of the new country was chiefly noticeable among new-comers. Those who got settled on the land soon found that the

landed proprietor's principal privilege was to be never out of work. We hear no more of them than as theorists. Howison says: "A deliberate inspection of a new settlement sinks man lower in the estimation of the observer than perhaps ever before." There is a general agreement among writers about the squalid appearance of the new settlers' dwellings; and the women writers agree in wondering that there were no flowers about the loghouses. The same people, they said, if they had remained at home, would have had gardens full of flowers. This may be accounted for partly by the way things grow in England, and by the force of habit and local rivalry. These were wanting in the backwoods; but other things were wanting too—seeds, for instance. Yankee seeds, in sealed packets only opened when paid for, were found to contain chaff, empty husks, and worm-eaten seeds.* There is no occasion, however, to go deep in considering the matter. The shanties displayed no care because the occupants had no time or strength for care. A new clearing was a desolate place for the first year or two. It produced no food, and, if the settler had no money, he had to hire himself out to get some in order to maintain his family. There were no animals, for cows, pigs and fowls must eat also. There were some hard years to be got through before a living was assured; but the very poor, for whom the early years were hardest, were those who in the end profited most by emigration. They had usually the sense to see their future and hold on until their farm produced enough to give them a constant round of plain living. With food, warmth and shelter, they had all they could have hoped for in the old world, and independence too. Many went under chiefly from taking up too much land. It was cheap, about fifteen shillings an acre, and only a quarter of the purchase price must be paid down. The rest was payable in three equal annual payments with interest at six per cent, which might accumulate. When it was allowed to do so, the case, for a man of no capital, was usually hopeless. In three years he could only clear about thirty acres, which, counting out the stumps, did not give more than twenty acres available for crops. A return of ten shillings an acre, i.e., £10 from the farm, was as much as could be expected, and the interest on the debt would be about the same.*

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* Traill, op. cit., p. 170.

Another class of immigrants consisted of persons having a small income, among whom were many half-pay British officers. Their income was not enough for bringing up their families in England in a way they thought proper, but it enabled them to live with considerable comfort on a Canadian farm. They could not make the farm add to their income because of the cost of labour, but, if they had chosen their land well and it rose in value as the country became more settled, they were often able, when the education of their children became an anxiety, to sell with advantage and move into one of the towns.

The small towns of this period had often a pleasant social circle, recruited from this class of immigrants. Most of the principal towns, in the part of Ontario that was then Upper Canada, were by this time in existence. Kingston, though its population was less than 5,000, was in some respects a rival of York. In 1825 it was reckoned the largest town in Upper Canada. It was the naval and military depot at one end of the Rideau Canal, and had a branch of the Bank of Montreal, the

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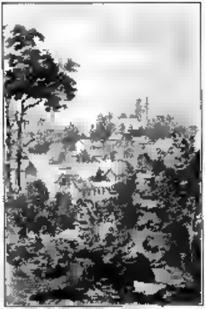
* See Shirreff's account of the settlers' problem, op. cit., p. 363.



Peterborough from the West

A water colour by Anne Langton

only bank in the province besides the Bank of Upper Canada at Toronto. Hamilton, as the capital of the Gore district, was flourishing, with a population of 3,000. St. Catharines had salt works and was the place of origin of the Welland Canal. London had a population of only 1,300, when Mrs. Jameson was there in 1836, but it had about 200 houses, a jail and court house, described as "somewhat Gothic," five churches, three or four schools and seven taverns.

The town upon which we must concentrate attention, in an introduction to the letters which follow, is Peterborough. Shirreff, whose *Tour through North America* was published in the very year these letters begin, does not speak of it with much respect. He describes it as "a number of mean houses, scattered over a considerable extent of surface." The population was placed at 1,000 souls, though Shirreff would not have rated it so high. He adds that it was "said to contain a number of military and naval half pay officers of Britain, and the society to be the most polished and aristocratic in Canada."* It was called Peterborough after Mr. Peter Robinson (a brother of the Chief Justice, then Attorney General), who, in 1825, went to Cork and brought out 500 emigrants to settle in Douro, and appears to have stayed by them and acted as their guardian and adviser until they were settled. At this time, Mrs. Stewart says,† there was but one inhabitant of Peterborough, Adam Scott, who had a mill on "the Plains," so the Irish immigrants who squatted at first on the Plains while their shanties in Douro were being built, were the first population of the place. Yet in 1832, Mrs. Traill,‡ a year or so earlier than Shirreff's account, supports him when she says there was "a very genteel society, chiefly composed of officers and their families, besides the professional men and store keepers, many of the latter persons of respectable family and good education."—"The store keeper in Canada," she says, "holds a very different rank from the shopkeeper of the English village. The storekeepers are the merchants and bankers of the places in which they reside." In 1832, the year before these letters begin, there were* "several saw and grist mills, a distillery, fulling mill, two principal inns besides smaller ones, a number of good stores, a government school house, which also serves for a church, till one more suitable should be built"—which happened in 1836, when St. John's was completed.†

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* P. 126.

† Op. cit., p. 45. She calls him "Walter," probably an error.

‡ Op. cit., p. 51.

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* *Ibid.*, p. 58.

† *Stewart, op. cit.*, p. 34.

THE ADVENTURE OF SETTLING

LETTERS OF 1833 AND 1834

[The account of the sea voyage in a sailing ship is interesting, but not a necessary part of a backwoods record. No more perhaps is a description of New York, as it was on July 6th, 1833, but the description is interesting and short.]

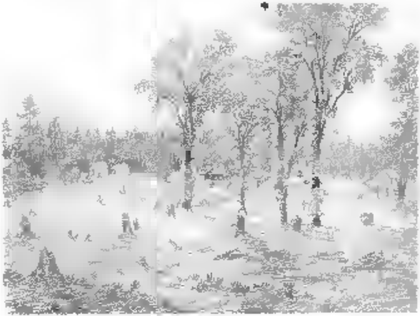
The Bay is certainly very pretty, but nothing like that of Naples to which the Yankees like to compare it. The town—or rather city—is striking from its contrast to any other great seaport I knew. Very little bustle is seen in the streets, and none of those heavy waggons we are accustomed to at Liverpool. The streets all over the town, even those leading to the docks, are lined with trees, which, together with the quietness of the scene, give it more the appearance of a country town in England than the great Emporium of the west. The Broadway, the principal street, leads from the Battery gardens (a pretty walk which occupies the point fronting the harbour) for at least one and a half miles through the center of the town; it is an excellent street, full of very English looking shops, and is the most busy part of the town, but it is the business of Bond Street, not of Cheapside.

7th. Being Sunday, went to one of the Episcopalian churches and might have fancied myself in England again, excepting the perpetual waving, which was kept up all the time, of certain—fans I suppose they are called here; they would be called fire screens in England—which are an inseparable accompaniment of the ladies in this country I must also except the want of the true orthodox twang in the Clerk.

[The journey from New York was by the Hudson—a magnificent stream about as like the Rhine as St. Paul's is to Westminster Abbey—but the Yankees, if they hear of anything praiseworthy in another country must find a counterpart in their own." He went to Troy a twenty four hours journey and thence by the Erie Canal to Oswego As the weekly Steamboat had sailed for York (i.e., Toronto) that morning passage was taken by schooner to Cobourg whence steamboats to York were said to be frequent. This accident seems to have governed his fate for he was detained at Cobourg waiting for a steamer and heard there a good account of the district above Peterborough, what we call the Kawartha Lakes then known as the Newcastle District.]

I have determined [he says] upon leaving my baggage here, and going up the country myself to Peterborough the Sturgeon Lake and the township of Verulam before I go on to York From all I can hear here from residents and land hunters like myself that I have met with that will be the part of the country most likely to suit me and as this is the nearest town to these townships, I shall start at four to-morrow and walk to the Rice Lake whence I can proceed by steam to Peterborough anything beyond that depends on circumstances. In about ten days I propose being in York

[From York, on his return from the expedition to Peterborough and beyond, he writes an account of it, the first of a series of letters which form a connected narrative.]



Peterborough from White's Tavern

Pencil drawing by Anne Langton

To his Father

York U.C. Aug 2 1833

Having a couple of hours before dinner with nothing particular to do I have bought a large sheet of paper that my account of my adventures may not unnecessarily fatigue your eyes with the small hand and the crossings which I was obliged to resort to in my two last letters * My last from Cobourg informed you of my journey up the country and my proposed exploring expedition into the Newcastle district, the next morning (22nd July) accordingly I started by the stage or rather waggon and after jolting over thirteen miles of mud and stumps arrived to dinner on the Rice Lake, which, as its name would denote is a low muddy ✓ swampy aguish looking place covered over with Canadian rice and other aquatic weeds From thence I proceeded twenty five miles by steamer up the Otonabee to Peterborough where, having gone to the wrong hotel, I occupied one eleventh of seven beds —

The Otonabee (with the accent on the second syllable) is a fine river winding through the forests, and perfectly navigable up to Peterborough, with the exception of one rapid a little below the town where even the steamer had to assist herself by warping. The banks are very low and immediately upon the water (as is the case in Canada universally wherever I have been)

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* Letters in those days were charged postage by the sheet. As envelopes were not used, but the paper merely folded and sealed, the number of sheets was distinguishable by the postman A single sheet of paper not exceeding an ounce in weight, was charged single postage A second piece of paper or any other enclosure, however small, constituted the packet a double letter but a single sheet of paper if it at all exceeded an ounce in weight, was charged with four fold postage. As postage was paid by the recipient of the letter the reasons given for using the large sheet of paper are of the nature of an apology

not very good; further back however there is no cause for complaint. All the lands have long been taken up and fetch a high price, but there are not more than half a dozen clearings all the way. I take shame to myself for having omitted to mention that, at the two principal bends of the river there are two cities, Cambleton* and Howard, the one consisting of a shanty, and the other of a loghouse without windows.

The 23rd. I was up early and walked about the town and neighbourhood, which seems very thriving indeed, from its being the center of an immense internal navigation, and from its being the only inland town in Canada, its inhabitants would fain believe that it will one day become the capital of the province.

Land in the neighbourhood has become very dear; the last town lot of half an acre sold, fetched £50, and, on the opposite side of the river, one lot of half an acre, being in a beautiful situation for building, sold for £100. All the low land on the banks of the river is reserved by Government, and the trees on it are only thinned, so that the town has not that naked appearance that characterizes the new towns in America. Peterborough would pass for a pretty thriving town even in England. After breakfast I called on Col. Brown, who showed me the lions and introduced me to several gentlemen of the place; in the evening I drank tea there and met ladies for the first time since leaving Liverpool. We walked up to Mr. Stuart's place, a couple of miles up the river. He was the first settler in the neighbourhood about twelve years ago, before Peterborough was thought of, and when it was two or three hard days journey from Cobourg through the forest. He still lives in the original loghouse, but it is made as comfortable and ornamental as any cottage in England, and he has a fine clearing. It is Mr Stuart* who wrote that account of his first settlement which you may remember in Basil Hall's America.

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* Campbellford.

24th. With my knapsack, a blanket, and some pork and biscuit upon my back, and a bottle of whiskey hanging John Gilpin-like at my side, I set off on my travels and walked through six miles of mud holes (for really a road is too good a name for many parts) to Chemong Lake, the old appellation, Mud Lake, having lately been dropped. Here a steamboat is building and will ply upon the lakes in about a month; how her engines were ever transported through the aforesaid mud holes is to me a mystery.† Having borrowed a boat I proceeded along the Mud Lake, which notwithstanding the nature of its bottom does not deserve the name, and reached the Indian village at its exit at dark; there are several clearings on Chemong Lake. Finding the man I was directed to absent on a hunting excursion, and not being able to get any answer out of the other Indians, I went to the schoolmaster for assistance. He gave me a supper and a clean bed, for which he would receive nothing, and procured me a guide in the person of a handsome and intelligent Indian. And now that I am fairly amongst the savages you will perhaps expect some romantic description; the tomahawk and scalping knife, the chivalrous tuft of hair, the moccasins, the robe, the war paint and barbaric ornaments should all have been detailed to you; but imagine my disappointment at being intro-

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* Mr Stuart is evidently Thomas Alexander Stewart, the husband of Frances Stewart, whose journals and letters form the book *Our Forest Home*, describing their settlement in Douro Township near Peterborough.

† The writer had not yet become acquainted with the advantages of snow.

✓duced to a respectable-looking young man, dressed decently like a Christian in coat, waistcoat and trousers, wearing a checked shirt and neckcloth, and covering his thick black hair with a common straw hat. This person, who owned no long unpronounceable name, but answered to the familiar appellation of Stephen Elliot, agreed to become my conductor for $1 a day, and accordingly, the next morning, the 25th, soon after sunrise, I seated myself on my pack at the bottom of his canoe, in company with two young foxes, and was paddled by Stephen and his stepson, William, up into Pigeon Lake. There are a few settlers on Pigeon Lake, but only one on the part I traversed, though the land is all occupied. On the river which joins Pigeon to Sturgeon Lake is a rapid, by name Bob Cajwin, where the scenery is picturesque, and (what is better) where there are good mill sites which Need* has purchased. Through these rapids a canal is in process of formation which, next spring, will admit the new steamboat upon Sturgeon Lake up to Cameron's Falls,† and up the Scugog River into the township of Ops. A little above Bob Cajwin is Need's clearing, where I stopped, but, not finding him in, I returned to Capt. Sawers' at the rapids, where I found him, and about one o'clock made an excellent breakfast upon some venison he had killed that morning. At his shanty I slept, after looking over his clearings and visiting the only other settler on the opposite side of the lake.

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* He had been given a letter of introduction to Mr. Need. A little book called *Six Years in the Bush*, written by Mr. Need in 1838, while he was in England on a visit, makes sometimes an interesting parallel narrative to that of these letters. In it Mr. Need describes his own settlement on Aug. 9, 1832.

† Now Fenelon Falls.

26th At nine I embarked again and proceeded along Sturgeon Lake pausing occasionally as I went to look at desirable situations and about noon arrived at Cameron's Falls The river below the falls winds through precipitous banks on both sides, affording many beautiful views, until, at one turn, you find yourself suddenly within twenty yards of the falls. I apply the term precipitous according to the literal meaning of the word but the rock is hardly anywhere more than twenty feet high and would hardly accord with our ideas of lofty precipices. The falls are a Niagara in miniature—just the same shape and with a great body of water, though only twenty two feet of pitch it is a very beautiful spot.

Around these falls Mr Jameson, whom I remember by sight as a young man in Liverpool, has made a large purchase and is very active in bringing out settlers of the poorest sort to occupy his land I spent an hour or two on the spot where he has some men clearing but the greater part of the lands about seem very poor the situation being the principal object

A little after three I embarked again and was now beyond the last settlement. On the road I visited an old clearing which has been grown up for the last twenty years, where my guide's father had formerly lived Whilst I was visiting his father's grave, (for whose sake I hope there were not as many mosquitoes about then as there are now) Stephen contrived to broach my whiskey bottle without my knowing it but, by its diminished weight and his noisy commendations of my sobriety I soon found out the fact. Indeed he shortly appeared to be very near drunk and grew very importunate for more, though much alarmed lest the boy should see him drink and tell his mother (a henpecked Indian!) When he found me firm he turned sulky the consequence of which was that I could not get him above the rapids into Balsam Lake and we were obliged to take up our abode for the night in a cedar swamp. Having no axe with us we could not obtain hard wood for our fire, and were obliged to be content with the dead boughs we picked up but, after we had cooked and eaten our supper I slept very comfortably upon my bed of cedar branches, notwithstanding the attacks of the mosquitoes.

27th. We were off again soon after daybreak, and breakfasted on a point near the head of Balsam Lake, beyond the boundaries of the surveyed townships. After coasting along the northern shore, as we were crossing to take a look at the surveyed portion below a storm came on which rendered it almost impossible to get across in that direction and, as I had already seen enough to judge of the situation, and as the wind was favourable for our return I resolved to make a great push to reach Need's that night and, after a severe day's work, with the assistance of the stream and a blanket which we put up as a sail, we arrived there soon after dark, and found that during our absence he had built a house. In our return we shot the rapids above Cameron's Falls to within about five yards of the brink, and after the Indians had got out, Stephen held the end of the canoe from the shore and let me down until, sitting in my canoe above, I could see the water boiling and foaming down below—'a very pokerish looking place' as Stephen observed.

28th. Need and I went to breakfast at Sawers' and about noon I started again and arrived at the Landing on Chemung Lake at sunset. It being near full moon my desire to sleep in a comfortable bed again induced me to brave the mudholes, and I arrived in Peterborough in safety.

[At Peterborough he waited for a Government sale of lands which did not come off, but, he says, "I made acquaintance in the inn with several gentlemen from whom I obtained much information upon the country." The country was naturally the principal subject of conversation among the land-hunters who met one another at the inns, who were for the most part Englishmen of some education. To this must be attributed a knowledge of the country, and familiarity with the procedure necessary in purchasing land, such as one would not expect in letters written so soon after arrival.

The preference for the Newcastle District was based upon its chain of lakes which gave promise of being a great water way; and water was still the only means of conveying goods in large quantity. The land-hunters were therefore using good judgment according to their lights. It would be too much to expect that the writer of these letters, although he had but a short time before been one of the guests carried in the trial trip of the railroad from Liverpool to Manchester, the first working railroad in the world, should connect that experiment with the idea of a railroad running about twenty years after, from one end to the other of the Canada of those days. He would have even less expected that the Trent Valley Canal, which was begun then in parts, and appears to have been projected in its entirety, would not be finished until the year 1918.]

To-day (Aug. 2nd), after looking about the town [York], I waited upon the Governor [Sir John Colborne] and had great difficulty in avoiding giving him a promise to go through the western townships before finally settling, it being his policy at present to send all respectable emigrants there; but, from all I have heard from those who have been there, I do not think they would suit me, and time is too precious to waste in merely looking about me. The great distance of land carriage, the high price of labour and the want of water, more than compensate for the quality of the land, that, I believe, is unquestionably superior to the average of these districts, and it is equally good everywhere; but there is also excellent land on the lakes, though you cannot, as in the west, buy land blindfold with security.

There are several reasons which induce me to give a preference to the Newcastle district. It is the most English of all the districts and the society of a superior caste; lands are to be purchased there cheaper than in any part at an equal distance from a market; there is not that want of water that has caused such great loss in many of the inland townships; instead of being shut up on all sides by the forests, you may obtain a healthy, airy frontage to some of the numerous lakes, which, besides making the situation more pleasant and, I should think, healthy, enables the settlers to burn,* when in the confined clearings in the heart of the forest there is not a breath of air stirring; mill sites are of course more numerous; labour is cheaper; and, lastly and principally, they have an extent of internal navigation unparalleled in any part of the world I should think.

I have annexed a diagram of part of the Newcastle district which may give you some idea of the lakes,

which are miserably laid down in all the maps I have seen. Beginning at the top with Balsam Lake two portages, one of three and the other of seven miles, connect it with Lake Simcoe from the West Bay; and the river to the north is navigable for canoes a long way through a string of small lakes. Where there is the mark **V** there is a rapid where one lock will join it to Cameron Lake, and just below this the Burnt River is navigable some way through a rich country. Two locks at Cameron's Falls lead into the North Branch

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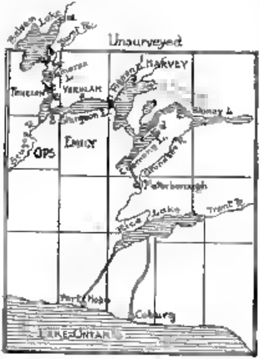
* To burn thoroughly the heaps of green tree trunks accumulated in a chopped clearing was a difficult matter and to have one side of the clearing open to the draught from a lake was an advantage.


Balsam Lake
Burnt R.
Unsurveyed
Cameron L.
FENELON
VERULAM
Pigeon L.
HARVEY
Sturgeon L.
Stoney L.
EMILY
OPS
Chemong L.
Otonabee R.
Peterborough
Rice Lake
Trent R.
Port Hope
Cobourg
LAKE ONTARIO

of Sturgeon Lake; the southern one is navigable through the township of Ops to within forty miles of York. One more lock at Bob Cajwin, which is to be completed this fall, leads into Pigeon Lake, the three rivers of which are navigable some way; and on through Buckhorn, Sandy and Chemong Lakes the passage is quite open. Six miles land carriage to Peterborough and thirteen to Cobourg lead you to the Ontario. The Trent too is navigable near twenty miles below Rice Lake, and a canal of ten or fifteen more to avoid the windings and rapids will continue it on to the Bay of Quinté.

After having seen these beautiful lakes and rivers abounding in mill sites, who would go to settle in the Governor's present favourite township of Adelaide, where cattle have been driven thirty miles to water and where there is near 100 miles of land carriage to a market—and such land carriage!—or else the produce has to go treble the distance by Lake Huron and the dangerous navigation of Lake Erie; and after all, unless you are on the Lake shore, you may have as much land carriage as there would be in the Newcastle district from Lake Simcoe to Montreal.

To assist you in following my motions I have marked on the diagram:—

a. Where I breakfasted on Balsam Lake
b. Where I slept.
c. Nead's
d. The Indian village

The upset price of Government, as you know, is 10/, but I am at present partly in treaty for certain U. E. rights, which I can procure at 3/9 to 5/-, and if I come to any arrangement upon the subject, the cost of my land will be materially diminished. The origin of these rights dates from the Revolutionary—I beg the Yankees' pardon—the War of Independence, when tickets for so many acres were given to the United Empire Loyalists, as they were called, for their services and to their children afterwards. Thousands of these rights have been bought up and settled, the price in the olden time being somewhere about 5d. or 6d. per acre, and some few yet remain unlocated. The cause of their being so much lower in price than government land is, that, by the grants, they must be settled and ten per cent. cleared in two years, which keeps the speculators in a great measure from purchasing them. A similar condition is annexed to the other lands indeed, but Government is not very strict except in the case of these rights, against the transfer of which they set their faces as much as possible; to an actual settler, however, such a condition is of no moment.

The mode of location is this:—I go to the Government office, and, upon showing my title, put down the name of my loyalist upon any unoccupied lot I please, and upon having fulfilled the conditions, I obtain my patent. The titles consist of the original certificates and two Powers of Attorney, the one authorizing me to locate his right where I please, and the other to sell it or do otherwise with it as I think fit. Sometimes, but not often, a little difficulty occurs in taking out the patents, as in a case at present before the Government. A man located a lot in the name of William Smith, but as it appears that, out of the three William Smiths remaining upon the list, two forfeited their rights in the late war, Government decline giving the patent until it is proved which is the true Simon Pure, which may be somewhat difficult, since all the three

Williams are dead. I am prepared, however, to run the risk, as such cases are very rare, and as it is also customary for the seller to enter into a bond to bear you harmless in case of the patent not being given, and my man is a very substantial and respectable man in the Province. Still I am not certain yet whether we shall agree about price, etc., the difficulty lying in the legal documents and who is to bear the expense of them. I shall not, I think, make any purchase at the next sale, but I will attend it, at any rate, to see how things are going. Immediately after the sale I mean to proceed up the Lakes again, to inspect some of the situations more minutely, which I shall be able to do now, as I have taken a copy of the government surveys, by which, with the assistance of a compass, I can find out exactly what lot I am upon—a very difficult matter before; and as I shall pass through York before the next sale, and shall there get permission to look over the surveyor's field notes, I shall be more prepared with knowledge of the nature of the land I am buying than I can be now.

Appendix to the Letter of August 2nd dated August 23rd

I must apologize *in limine* for the wide interval between my two dates, but the fact is, that expecting soon to return, I left this letter in my trunk at Cobourg and have only rejoined it yesterday.

I did not make any purchase at the sale of the 6th inst., though there was no opposition to most of the bidders, and my plan of going up the lakes was delayed partly by the weather and partly by the prolonged absence of a certain Quaker, by name Hunter, who had agreed to accompany me—so we did not set out until the 16th. In the meantime I employed myself in excursions into the country round about [Peterborough apparently] and in assisting my late Westmoreland fellow-traveller[*] to find a cleared farm and when the rain confined me to the house, in reading certain French German and Greek books which belonged to a young man of Dublin University.

On the 16th Mr Hunter and I with a Mr McAndrew set off and walked eleven miles to the bottom of Chemong Lake where we borrowed a boat across to the Indian village. No guide, however, was to be procured but we at last induced James McQue[†] a halfbreed the interpreter of the tribe to take us up to his father's about five miles further but here the whole family were out hunting so we finally agreed to borrow his canoe and paddle ourselves. I was the only one who had ever been in a canoe I believe, certainly the only one who had ever paddled so I took the steering department, and with one or other of my companions in front we reached Bob Cajwin at sunset. On Pigeon Lake we had to work up against a high wind and, as keeping a canoe steady even in a calm is no easy matter I can assure you it was hard work. We slept at Sawers' whom we had met going down to Peterborough and slept very comfortably upon his floor. 17th. We paddled across the lake to Darcus's of whom we borrowed a boat which as it had a sail and as McAndrew and I are both pretty good hands at an oar was a more comfortable mode of conveyance thence we crossed to Need's and borrowed an axe and about ten set off up the Lake.

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[*] A fellow-traveller on the ship, coming out.

[†] This name is spelt in these letters both McQue and McGue. The uncertainty may have been with the copyist. The writer however in a note on these lakes written many years later, spelt the name McCue. Mrs Stewart, in *Our Forest Home* speaks of Billy McKue. It is possible that the half-breed family did not spell their name at all but caught it by ear from their white progenitor and his name may have been the more usual one McHugh.

The first place we made for was *f* [a place Need wished them to locate] but notwithstanding my compass and maps I believe we found the wrong place, however in a mile's incursion back into the woods, we found nothing worth looking at.

We found it almost impossible to ascertain our exact position, for the blazes which denote the lines of the lots and concessions are obliterated by time—if they were ever properly marked. We landed again to dinner just round Sturgeon Point, at a spring which the Indians had shewn me and then crossed the Lake to where the word Fenelon is written, where Mr Hunter has some land which he wished to look at Here we spent an hour or two in the woods and then made a hard push for Cameron's Falls. After having ascertained that the falls were even more beautiful than before, I conducted my companions to the shanty through the woods, which we found deserted however we took possession, and after considerable rummaging discovered a barrel of pork and of flour and a frying pan in which we baked a cake having spread a bed of cedar boughs we retired to rest, and I for one knew nothing of the miseries of this wicked world till the sun had been long risen.

18th By nine we had breakfasted taken a look at the beauties of the place, and joined our boat again below the falls We first landed on our return at *e* where Mr Hunter and I made a long excursion back and found some excellent land, rising considerably though gently back from the lake, and moreover discovered the mouth of a creek which even at this season had plenty of water. This I determined to buy. We then crossed over to his land, followed up a creek there for about a mile through indifferent land, and having dined again at our spring and landed at what we believe to be the real *f*, we reached Need's to sleep, and *next day* proceeded on to Peterborough. Tuesday the 30th was the sale at which Mr. McAndrew, who will be a pleasant neighbour, bought land at *g* opposite Sturgeon Point, and I bought about 300 acres where the dotted lines are at *e*, including the creek, which McDonell, the agent at Peterborough, who knows the country well, tells me has a fall of 20 feet, a good mill site. This I certainly did not see myself, but, from the high land behind and the body of water in the creek, there must be something of the kind, though perhaps not convertible to much use for a mill, where Cameron's Falls are so near. For one lot of 115 acres containing the creek I was bid up to 14/-, the other two of 126 and about 40 or 50 acres I got at 10/-. Besides this I have bought two U. E. rights of 200 acres each at 5/3, one of which I have resold at a profit of £12 10, and the other I have located immediately adjoining my other land but in the township of Verulam. If B— [a friend, who came out on the same ship], from whom I have never heard, proposes to settle beside me, he can get a lot on my south.

Now for my future plans. I am now on my road to York to pay my instalments, thence I go to Lake Simcoe to learn what B— is about, and I expect to be in Peterborough before the 2nd September. I shall then contract to have ten or fifteen acres cleared and ready for the crop in the spring and make another contract for a house to be built before winter and shall

immediately go up and take possession. I mean to do all by contract, keeping no labourer of my own till spring; the wife of one of the contractors or their men will be sufficient to cook and wash for me, and my own time will be fully taken up in superintending the workmen, surveying the capabilities of my land, and making the interior of my house comfortable after it is built, and beautifying the outside with something of a garden. The clearing I expect, will cost me about twelve to fifteen dollars an acre, probably not more than the first sum, as a good deal of it will be paid in pork and flour. As to the house I cannot say what it will be as I hear so many opinions, and indeed have not yet finally settled its nature and dimensions. No two people give the same advice. Some say a shanty is good enough, others talk of log, frame, stone and brick houses. Franklins, cooking and common stoves, and chimneys of different constructions, have each their advocates. I incline myself to the regular routine, a wigwam the first week, a shanty till the log house is up, and the frame, brick or stone house half a dozen years hence, when I have a good clearing and can see which will be the best situation.

A Letter to a Friend

Cobourg, Aug. 23, 1833.

In conformity with my promise of writing to you as soon as I had fixed on the spot where I am to spend my life, I seize the first vacant moment since my purchase to inform you that on Tuesday last, the 20th Aug., between the hours of eleven and twelve, I became, for the first time in my life, a Lord of the soil.

Now look at the map of Upper Canada. Do you see the Bay of Quinte, upon which Kingston is situated? Well—the river Trent runs into this bay as you will see, and, if you will take the trouble to follow it up for some twenty or thirty miles (which you must do on foot, for it is not navigable), you may then get into a boat and sail up into the Rice Lake. You will admire it very much for the beauty of its banks and islands, though at this season of the year the wild rice beds give the lake itself more the appearance of a grass plot than a sheet of water, but I would not advise you to stay long admiring the scenery or you will probably catch the ague; but go at once to the town of Sully (where you will find one house), whence you may take a steamer which will carry you twenty-five miles up the river Otonabee to Peterborough.

After the specimen of Canadian towns which you will have seen at Sully and at two others on the river—Howard containing a shanty, and Cambleton* a log-house without windows—you will be surprised to find Peterborough a very pretty, picturesque, thriving village, with about 2,000 inhabitants and near thirty genteel families within visiting distance, but you will be more surprised to find that in 1825 scarcely a dozen white men had ever trodden the woods where it stands.

From hence you may continue to ascend the river and will enter some very beautiful lakes, but as the Otonabee is scarcely navigable for canoes above the town, I would recommend you to turn your face towards the N.N.W., and walk six miles till you reach the Chemong or Mud Lake at Bridgenorth (Population 1). This individual will lend you a boat which you may row five miles north to the Indian village.

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* See ante p. 6 (note)

Of course one so well acquainted with Uncas, Chingachgook, Magua, etc., knows what to expect in his Indian guide, but, nevertheless, you will be surprised again, upon being introduced to Stephen Elliot, James McQue, Joe Bullfrog, Joe Muskrat or any other of the fraternity, to behold a handsome young man with long black hair dressed respectably in hat, shirt, coat, waistcoat and trousers, and with all the other outward and visible signs of a Christian man. Even my most respectable friend Capt. Nogy, the chief, I will engage shall not at all remind you of the great Sagamore of the Mohicans. They are all a most peaceable, sober set of men. I doubt if any of them ever saw human blood except old Bedford who killed his wife, but that, as he says in excuse, was a long time since. I cannot, however, say as much for their industry; some of them would sooner fast twenty-four hours than take the trouble to cook a meal. All this and more you will have had time to observe before any of the aforesaid gentlemen will have made up their minds whether they will take you up or not.

However I will suppose you in a canoe, moving lazily up into Pigeon Lake, and thence, through the rapids called Bob Cajwin, into Sturgeon Lake. I forgot to say that at the rapids you passed the town of Verulam (Population 0), but on the Lake you will find six settlers. Certainly this is not many, but then four of them have been at an University, one at the military college at Woolwich, and the sixth, though boasting no such honours, has half a dozen silver spoons and a wife who plays the guitar.

Now look at the map again. You will observe that the Sturgeon Lake runs east and west for about ten miles and that it then divides into two branches, the one running south leads you into a settled township called Ops, the other leading north towards Cameron Lake. Up this last you will please to sail along the eastern coast for about two miles, when you will see a stony beach lined with cedar, hemlock, birch and pine, and immediately behind that the brighter foliage of the oak, maple and basswood. If you look very narrowly at this shore in about a month, you will see a very small clearing, and near a brook you will perceive a wigwam composed of birch bark and cedar boughs. Pray step on shore and walk in; you will find an old friend who can at any rate promise you some salt pork and unleavened bread, with a cigar and a glass of whiskey; and it is more than probable that a fine bass or maskinonge fresh from the Lake, or a couple of wood ducks, as fat as ortolans, may be added to the repast; who knows whether a haunch of venison or a sirloin of bear may not be forthcoming. A fire before the entrance of the wigwam will serve the treble purpose of giving warmth, light to eat your supper, and of keeping off the mosquitoes, and a bed of cedar boughs, with a buffalo robe for a covering, you will find no despicable lodging. This and a welcome is all I can offer you, but in the morning I will lead you through the woods to see all the wonders of my estate. You shall behold a swamp, into which however you cannot penetrate till the frost gives you firm footing; you shall see a beautiful hill gently sloping down to the lake and from which there is a beautiful view—if the trees were out of the way—and where a mansion will some day stand, and a brook—or creek as we call it—which will be the site of a mill. Then I will take you to an old settlement of the Mohawks, who were massacred about fifty years ago by the fathers of your respectable friends Joe Moskrat, Joe Bullfrog, etc. After this I will paddle you in my canoe to Cameron Falls, about six miles off, where you may see Niagara in miniature; the fall is only twenty-two feet high, but the body of water is very great and the shape exactly that of Niagara.

Here, before winter, you may meet another Liverpool acquaintance. I don't know whether you knew a tall short-sighted Irishman by the name of Jameson, who used to pull in one of the boats.* I remember him by sight only. He has made a very large speculation in land here, amongst the rest the lot in which the Falls are situated, and proposes building mills there.

Beyond this all is wilderness, though the speculators have bought a good deal of land. Jameson, if he comes to settle this winter, will be both my nearest and my last neighbour. At present, I am the pioneer of the township, for, though Jameson has begun a clearing, it is deserted again, and I fear I shall have no one there till spring. But, as soon as the ice breaks up in the spring, a steamboat will pass my door, and who shall say that I am then beyond the precincts of civilization?

When this steamer, which will be finished next week, can get through the locks now building at Bob Cajwin, I shall have only six miles of land carriage to Peterborough, and thirteen from the Rice Lake to Cobourg to bring me upon Lake Ontario. I shall then be in *uninterrupted* water communication with upwards of 150 miles of coast, along these back lakes and rivers. Yet, with all these advantages, I get a block of excellent land, with half a mile frontage to the lake, and with a mill site* upon it, at a price averaging 8/- an acre. Land which has far less advantages is now selling at £5 an acre; the very mill site alone, if near Peterborough, would sell for much, much more than I gave for all the land. *If* it was near Peterborough, you will say—but, I answer, land near Peterborough might, three years ago, have been bought at even a less price; and why should not land on Sturgeon Lake increase in value as well as on the Otonabee. Good land, in good situation, is now getting very scarce; and, when the new lands are all bought up, the old ones must rise rapidly in price.

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* At Cambridge.

All these speculations as to the rise of land are *entre nous*; though I am convinced of the eligibility of my situation, I will not talk of it till it comes to pass; but bear in mind that the 16th lot in the Xth, the 16th and 17th in the XIth concession of Fenelon, and the 17th in the Ist of Verulam, containing 500 acres more or less, only cost £200, and ask five years hence what they are worth.

I don't know of anything else that would prove very interesting to you from this quarter of the globe, lots and concessions being the only subject of conversation here

To his Mother

Peterborough Sept. 12 1833

So soon after the date of my last I do not know whether I should have written again if three circumstances had not combined to induce me to such a step.

First that before the end of next week I shall be a dweller in the woods and consequently, as chairs and tables are scarce articles there I may not have conveniences for writing a letter for a month to come; secondly, that I yesterday received a letter from you; and lastly, that at this hour of half past ten I find myself sitting by the fire with nothing to do, and I know from dire experience that, unless I sit up till one or two to get very, very sleepy, the fleas will have commenced their attacks before I get fairly asleep and then there will be little rest for me, for when once they begin they come on in such armies, that even in the dark I have caught a dozen or two in the course of the night.

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* Water was still the available source of power

[The letter describes how, after finding that his friend B— was settled, the remaining days of August were consumed at York in waiting on the slow process of getting his papers for the land he had purchased. The time was partly filled in by a visit to Niagara by means of a steamer which, after coasting to the head of the Lake and landing us for two or three hours at the pretty village of Hamilton, reached the town of Niagara at nine o'clock, whence a stage carried us to the Falls, where we arrived at midnight. The inn was completely full and it was with difficulty I could obtain permission to sleep on the floor. At five o'clock I was up and walked down to the Tablerock, etc. [Pleasure seeking was laborious even then, when people were not in a hurry. We need not follow him about the Falls, though the description with which he paid the forfeit of having seen Niagara as it was then has some historical interest. It was September 3rd before he got back to Peterborough.]

Arrived at Peterborough I commenced enquiries for choppers but, as no decent men could be found, I was advised to wait a week till the harvest was fairly over

and the poor settlers were ready to leave their farms for a winter's job. Accordingly I set out with my former companion McAndrew for Sturgeon Lake, intending to spend the time usefully in looking at our land again and fixing upon the points for building our houses and commencing our clearings.

September 5th. Having got my papers prepared I sent them off to York and started for the Mud Lake, which we reached just in time for our new steamer's first trip. Of course, on a lake on which nothing but Indian canoes had been heretofore seen, we could not expect a magnificent steamboat, but I must confess I was considerably disappointed with her working. She is built like a scow, that is, to be more intelligible to you, very much after the shape of a wash tub, a small draught being the principal object. Her accommodations for passengers are by no means bad; she carries sixty tons of goods and can go at six or seven knots an hour. All this sounds very well, but unfortunately her steam is exhausted directly, and I am afraid she will never do much good till she gets new boilers. However this was the first trip and we laboured under many disadvantages. The water is just at the lowest point and the Captain hardly knows the best channels, owing to which circumstances we stuck in the mud for an hour, during which we broke our pump and had therefore to stop every now and then for near an hour to pump the boilers full again by hand; add to which that our wood was quite green, and until we stopped to cut down a few cedars the second day we never had a decent fire, and consequently had to stop an hour or so sometimes to wait for more steam.

As we approached the Indian village there was a curious scene, every living soul turned out upon the shore, shouting "Shemong, Shemong" (canoe) and receiving us with repeated discharges of firearms which we returned with three cheers and as good a salute as we could muster. We stopped here awhile and the Indians were invited on board, to the number of about thirty men and half a dozen squaws. Mr Tupper, formerly an Indian trader, now a storekeeper in Peterborough, was fortunately on board and acted as master of ceremonies. He is a nice little man and a great favourite among the Indians, who call him "Shosh," which, being interpreted, I found, to my astonishment, means "a little bird passing rapidly between you and the sun," by which is meant that he is what the Yankees call "pretty considerable spry." About three dozen wine glasses were produced and handed to each, according to his rank, with some appropriate speech, but, as we only had about half a bottle of port on board, the quantity was increased and the quality not deteriorated by the admixture of a bottle and half of brandy. I was introduced in great form to Nogy and Bill Crane, the two chiefs, and then they were taken to view the wonders of the engine room. With all our guests on board we proceeded on our journey into Buckhorn—Lake shall I call it?—Swamp were a better word,—where we were to pass the night and discharge some of our passengers. As many of the Indians as their canoes would carry left us here, but a considerable number, with the squaws, encamped on shore, with whom I spent an hour or two, watching their proceedings. It was a curious scene. The night was beautiful though frosty, and the Aurora formed a bright arch across the zenith, the northern

part filled with streamers, changing their lines and forms every moment, and underneath, round a blazing fire, sat about twenty Indians, the men lounging about, some dozing, some smoking, whilst the squaws were engaged in washing potatoes and putting them into a huge boiler, or twisting and tearing off lumps of venison which were added to the mess.

In the morning I bought a canoe and amused myself, for three or four hours, in paddling amongst the numerous low islands, until about ten o'clock the steamer was ready to start; but, though the distance is not much more than twelve miles, we did not reach Bob Cajwin till dark;—or rather, as it should be called, Bob-cajion unk, though it generally goes by the former name or the familiar appellation of Bob.

7th. Early in the morning McAndrew and I borrowed Capt. Sawers' boat and performed a pretty hard day's work, rowing upwards of thirty-five miles and scrambling through the bush not far short of ten; but what made it worse was that from half past five to nine o'clock in the evening, we had nothing to eat but two small biscuits, one for tea and the other for dinner. To this sad fare we were reduced by Capt. Sawers who obstinately refused to give us any pork or flour or even to lend us a pot in which to boil some potatoes we had begged,—to punish us, as he said, for coming unprepared from such a land of plenty as Peterborough to sponge upon the poor backwoodsman at Bob. We first landed at the mouth of my creek and pushed on, along its course, for about a mile, through an almost impassable cedar swamp,—not so much impassable from the wet as from the thousands of trees which encumber the ground in every direction, sometimes five or six deep, in every stage of decay.

To you I dare say a swamp conveys no very pleasant ideas, but I look upon that bit of land as the best I have; in the first place the cedars (though not red cedar) are very valuable for posts, rails and sundry other purposes; there is at least a foot of vegetable matter at the top and a good alluvial soil at the bottom and there cannot be any difficulty in draining it. If the creek were cleared from the decayed trees, which choke it up everywhere, the fall is such that it would drain the land without any further expense, and this will not be difficult, for if a cedar swamp is well chopped and the fire put in at a good time it will not leave a particle of inflammable matter behind; indeed it only burns up too much. The cedar stumps, it is true, will not rot out in two or three generations, but, if fire is put into them in a year or two, they will burn down below the surface and leave you perfectly clear meadow land, though certainly ill adapted to the plough; and for the former purpose such land is for other reasons the most proper, as in spring and autumn it will be liable to flood.

We next landed at a pretty point, attracted by the sandy beach, which is rather a rare thing along these lakes, and found excellent land close down to the shore; but what pleased me better, we stumbled upon a brook, running merrily over a gravelly bottom, the mouth of which is imperceptible from the lake. Where it comes from and whether it may not be another mouth of the former one I cannot tell, for the ground was covered with a kind of nettle, growing very high, which, though not so painful as our English nettle, made nothing of stinging through our trousers. Near this is to be my shanty, there being every advantage, dry and good

land, excellent water, a sandy beach for my canoe, and a fine open view down the lake.

My land at any rate is well watered, for, besides the two larger streams, on my former journey I discovered a small one, which may indeed be the same as this last, but, where I crossed it, it was running in an opposite direction; but in my next letter I shall be able to give you a better account of the topography of my land.

Again we landed and went back on another part where there is a hill, which will undoubtedly be the situation for a house, some dozen years hence, if matters prosper with me. But now comes the worst of the business. In surveying a township the surveyor only marks the boundary lines and the concession lines, which in Fenelon run north and south; and, as my shore runs in the same direction, of course my boundaries are the side lines, which are merely imaginary lines which none but a surveyor can find; so that I am in the most pleasing uncertainty whether any of these three points is in my land. By guessing at the distance from Sturgeon Point and Cameron's Falls, and by the bearing of a creek on the opposite side of the lake, I thought that I could find my front, which is a mile in extent, and my creek I considered an infallible guide; but since I have found two where only one is marked, I begin to doubt whether the cedar swamp is not to the north of me. Again, if that is really my creek, the hill is so near my other boundary that I dare not begin clearing there; and as for the other creek,—I yesterday found out a nasty little broken front of ten or twelve acres, barely perceptible on the map, which comes exactly in the middle of my frontages and which I vehemently suspect to be the identical spot where the creek falls into the lake. This however I will buy on Tuesday at all costs, and then I think I may be certain of being on my own land.

After leaving my part of the lake we crossed to search for McAndrew's land, but, after a three hours' search, we could not even find the boundary of the two townships, such is the uncertainty in which we poor pioneers are left. I have since seen the surveyor of Verulam, who will be up there next week, and has promised to mark the boundary. This will set McAndrew at ease, but as to me, the running of my lines will be a tedious and, I am afraid, an expensive job, and at any rate he has not time to do it now, being engaged to lay out the town at Bob-cajion, which is to be called St. Albans.*

After toiling through the woods in all directions in search of a blaze, tired, hungry and mosquito-bitten, McAndrew and I sat down in despair under a cedar, woefully contemplating a ten mile row home against a confounded wind which had sprung up right in our teeth, and, by way of getting home the faster, both most unintentionally fell fast asleep, the consequence of which was that we had to go down the rapids in the dark, which we accomplished without touching a rock, a thing by the bye which I never yet could do by daylight.

The next morning (the 8th) we took the precaution of getting a good breakfast before starting and of begging a slice of bread of one of the workmen; and, it being Sunday, we took two of Sawers' men to help us to pull up on a second blaze hunt; but devil a bit of anything could we find, though, in a long push back through the woods, we must have crossed the line several times. We found out its situation, however, within a hundred yards or so, from the bearings of the opposite shore, so that McAndrew has the pleasure of knowing that, if his house is not on his own land, it is at any rate not more than twenty or thirty yards on his neighbour's.

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* The survey, as Mr. Need notes in *Six Years in the Bush*, took place a month later, on Oct. 6th, but the place was not called St. Albans. The village was laid out, apparently by the Government, in connection with the work of connecting Sturgeon and Pigeon Lakes by a canal. In the following year, on July 16th, 1834, when the Lieutenant-Governor came up to view the works, he named the settlement Rokeby, the name still commonly used for that part of the village of Bobcaygeon.

Next morning, the 5th, we arranged to return with Athill (one of our settlers) in his canoe, and were to start at six o'clock; but as he very kindly got up at five, and was a mile on his road when we went into his room to call him, we were left once more in the lurch. However we found a workman, more hospitable than his master, who gave us a breakfast, and another who lent us a leaky canoe in which we embarked, leaving our friends to enjoy their joke, and having at least gained this much experience,—that no one should trust to friends in the woods, for such indispensable articles as provisions and a canoe.

As we carried an extra cargo of a hundred weight of water —of course the wind was in our teeth,—what with that and stopping to bale from time to time, we were five good hours up to our knees in water in paddling eight miles to McQue's, where we succeeded in getting his son to take us down in a dry canoe. But, as fate would have it, when we had a prospect of dry feet, the rain commenced, and lasted till we reached Peterborough at dark. The sole subject of our conversation for the last mile was the pleasures of a hot supper and a bottle of ale. Alas! on our arrival the ale was finished and a cold fowl all the eatables in the house, to a leg of which we had just helped ourselves, when a hungry Yorkshireman entered and most unceremoniously transferred the remainder to his plate. However some bread and butter and a bottle of mulled wine put us in spirits again, and we retired to bed to wish ourselves back in the woods where at any rate there are no fleas

Ever since I have been here I have as yet secured no choppers but expect to do so to-morrow My provisions and other necessaries are all ready and for stock to my farm I have procured a kitten and am looking out for a goat for milk during winter On Wednesday *Deo volente* I mean to sleep at Need's and on Thursday (19th Sept) under a cedar on my own land For the present I must give up my pen hoping to get to sleep soon enough to cheat the fleas if my cold feet will allow me for my fire has been long out and the nights are already getting abominably frosty

To his Father

Peterborough Oct. 21 1833

I am much obliged to you for the fishing tackle. I fear that much of it will be of little use to me upon our lakes neither salmon nor trout making their appearance so high up but the lines at any rate will be useful to me, and the rest perhaps to fishers on the lower lakes

Our fish are the bass the maskinonge—a most excellent species of pike, as fat almost as an eel—and the eel itself the sunfish I believe we have but I have never seen nor tasted any the whitefish abound above and salmon trout below The bass is our staple commodity and a most excellent one it is if you are on the lake, tie a line, baited with a piece of red cloth, round your wrist and proceed on your journey, and it is ten to one that, before you have got a quarter of a mile, you will feel your prize. In some parts of the lake, if you are short of meat for dinner, you may put the potatoes on to boil and, before they are done enough, you may have ten or twenty bass on the gridiron. Maskinonge and eel are generally speared, a very difficult matter till one has studied the laws of refraction a little. I have bought some seine twine and mean to net a net this winter which I expect will supply me pretty well with fish next summer; and I do not know whether it may not be worth while to take up an old pork barrel with the brine to Lake Kinashgingiquash, some vacant week in the summer, and bring back a cargo of whitefish, which, salted in that manner, are almost as good as herrings. At any rate I cannot afford salt pork at present prices; I am selling it to my choppers at £4-12-6 p. barrel of 200 lb., and I do not make a half-penny by it.

For game—we have abundance of venison which is becoming more plentiful as the clearings increase, affording them more food and driving off the wolves; you may buy it of the Indians at 1½d. p. lb., and sometimes for less. Partridge and rabbits are pretty plentiful, but the former difficult to get without a dog. Ducks in thousands and tens of thousands, frequent the rice beds at the mouth of the Scugog about four or five miles from me. These together with a bear, two wolves, martens, racoons, muskrats and squirrels are my only acquaintances as yet.

In a fortnight or so I hope to send you a parcel myself, by some private hand, in return for yours; its principal contents will be some maps of the Newcastle

district which I am publishing, partly with a view to profit and partly to benefit the district. I am pretty certain not to lose and expect to make a profit of £10 or £15; at any rate I have the merit of setting a good example, for as soon as my map was in the press government gave orders for similar maps of all the districts to be published. The plan is to have all the townships marked and the lines of the lots indicated. Such maps of each district are to be seen at the Surveyor's office upon payment of 1/3, so you may suppose that the clerks, to whom the fee comes, throw every imaginable impediment in the way and they at first refused to give my printer the copies even when he showed them the positive order of the Governor to that effect.

I believe I have now fully answered your letters and may go on with my journal from somewhere about the 12th September.

I believe I added as I was leaving Peterborough that I had been detained by the expected arrival of the Governor. Indeed the whole town was in as great a ferment as if His Majesty himself had been expected. Militia men turned out and the guard mounted before a loghouse, dignified with the name of Government House. By the bye, the said house is so full of bugs that they dared not invite his Excellency to sleep in it and had rigged up a tent near it, under which his bed was prepared. However, as I said before, Col. Brown and his men were parading about for two days, and one whole day was spent by nearly half the town in erecting a flagstaff. The second day it was considered certain he would come, and we all, except one or two cunning ones, put on our clean shirts etc. Troopers were galloping about in all directions watching all the avenues by which the enemy might approach; and a man was stationed on an elevated point, with orders to keep his eyes fixed on the bridge and to fire a shot the moment the great man crossed it. At last, about noon, every thing was ready; the colonel had drawn out his forces so as to make the best possible show, the dozen who had uniforms being posted in conspicuous situations, and a reserve of ragged Irishmen being drawn up behind the cow house to fire a salute. And, after all, they ended by saluting our parson, or rather his horse; for the reverend gentleman, finding the animal which had been sent forward to bear the honoured weight of the Governor, mounted him and rode forward with the news that he was not coming at all. Some of the officers, who had their uniforms on, were very indignant; those who had made everything ready to slip them on at a moment's warning laughed; but as for our worthy little Colonel—for a full minute it was doubtful whether he would not cry. Mr. McDonell, the government agent, bore it with the greatest philosophy,—he merely observed, "Well, well, then we'll eat the little pig ourselves." Nevertheless it was no small inconvenience to me, for the boat was stopped to carry the Governor up our Lakes, and I could not get off by it after all, for the captain, when he found he had been made a fool of for three or four days, set off in a pet, without giving anybody notice.

Finding I could not get it till Monday the 23rd, I sent enough luggage to serve for my first settlement, to go on that day, and took that opportunity of going up to Sandy Lake on Saturday the 21st, with a Mr. Mudge of the Navy, who is settled there, and with a Lieut. Hay, R.N., who was on the lookout for land

The greater part of the day (Sunday, the 22nd) Mudge did the honours of his lake, and in the evening we walked across to little Bald Lake. Both of these are very beautiful, but, notwithstanding their greater vicinity to Peterborough, I do not like them so well as my own situation, the land being not so good and they being out of the chain of lakes. The next day they and I walked over to Buckhorn Lake, where we met two Indians by appointment who took us down to Deer Bay or rather Lake where we landed and went back in several places; the scenery is the most beautiful I have seen and the land the worst,—I am afraid they are two things which do not go together.

We had expected to be in time to catch the steamer in Buckhorn Lake, but, in consequence of a deer hunt which kept us some time, we were too late, and had to sleep at a house there. The next morning, the 24th September, we* started by day break in my own canoe which I had brought up from the Indian village. The mist was so thick I could scarcely find my way to the nearest house on the shore, where we intended to breakfast. Upon arriving there, we found them all ill of the ague and no eatables, so were obliged to push on to Billy McQue's. There nobody was at home but we took possession, and, thinking the spade looked cleaner than the frying pan, I broiled some venison we had with us on it; finding some ears of corn we roasted them also and made an admirable breakfast. As we were finishing one of the lads came in and offered us some potatoes, which we, thinking we had some way to go and as it was already afternoon, accepted; whilst they were boiling we broiled some more venison and after our dinner started again and reached Bob-

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* *Lieutenant Hay and himself.*

[illegible] pretty early, where we slept on shavings in a loft at Sawers'.

Early on Wednesday morning, the 25th September, I found out the two men I had engaged to chop for me and, upon consulting with them, found that their boat and canoe were insufficient to take up our luggage, so I borrowed a scow and four men at 3/6 a day, from the canal which is cutting, and, after several hard hours' work, they got my load up the rapids. About two o'clock they reached Sawers', and thence Hay and I went on in the canoe and had a fire ready for them to cook their dinner at Need's. From thence I got them off about four o'clock, and, as it was a beautiful afternoon and we had a moon, I intended to work at it all night. About five we set off to follow them and overtook them at sunset, when the weather became menacing, and soon after a tremendous thunderstorm came on which forced us to land at the nearest point we could make. This, in the dark, happened to be a swamp—and here I must leave us for the present, endeavouring, for a long time ineffectually, to light a fire.

[The narrative of this expedition is continued in a letter addressed to his sister, dated the same as the previous letter, Peterborough, Oct. 31, 1833. This letter was also received on the same day as the other.]

Having filled the largest sheet I can find to my father with my adventures, and having still more than a month to record, I do not see why I should not kill two birds with one stone and dedicate the continuation to you. I left us, as you will no doubt know before you get this, endeavouring to light a fire upon a little ridge in a swamp by the lake side, and you must now imagine us successful notwithstanding the rain, and fancy Mr

Hay and myself, six men, a woman and a half starved wretched little baby sitting round the fire, some drying themselves, the rain having abated, and some cooking supper. Here we determined to sleep, and after supper the woman and baby were put under the boat. Mr Hay and myself stretched ourselves side by side near the fire with our knapsacks as pillows and my blanket and water proof cloak over us, and the men each crept under a bush or tree as best he could, one poor devil not knowing how far he was going had not even brought his coat with him.

As I have mentioned the baby, lest your compassion should be too much excited by it, it may be as well to observe, that though the most miserable puny little creature imaginable a month since, it is now, thanks to the air of the woods, at least half a year older in appearance and more noisy than is at all agreeable.

It rained all night, but thanks to my waterproof Hay and I remained dry, but, about three or four in the morning such a storm commenced that we were obliged to fly for shelter to a hollow tree where notwithstanding our cramped position I slept most soundly till day break. It having cleared again a little, we breakfasted and started about seven (26th Sept.) but we had barely proceeded a mile when a storm more awful than any I have seen in Canada commenced, and Hay and I made with all speed for a sandy beach and there upsetting the canoe we crept under and lay there till noon, without ever daring to peep out and see what had become of the scow. I don't think I ever saw such tremendous rain. About noon, having exhausted all our topics of conversation and having slept as much as we could, we got tired of our situation and there being no chance of its clearing up, we emerged from our hiding place and launched our canoe. The scowmen were not far off, under a cedar tree; we roused them up and got once more under way. Mr. Hay and I in the canoe, and the woman and child with her husband in the boat, going on before to my land to light a fire, etc.

There we landed about three o'clock, completely drenched, and prepared to light a fire when we discovered that my fool of a man had brought no means of procuring a light. Now I, who, for the last four or five years of my life, never stirred out without tinder and flint and steel in my pocket, happened on this occasion to have left them behind; and, the only gun we had with us being a percussion one, we could get no fire from it; so we were obliged to send the man back in the boat to meet the scow, and, after near two hours vain endeavours to warm ourselves, we at last got a good fire up and supper cooked, just as the scow arrived. The evening having become fine on a sudden and the wind being fair, I determined upon sending the men back in the scow, much against their inclination. Just about sunset, however, the bad weather returned, and, as the poor devils did not get back till three o'clock the next afternoon, they have given me a bad name, averring that I only gave them four meals in three days, which is strictly true; but then they forgot to say that they had already breakfasted the first day and that I offered them at parting as much pork and potatoes with them as they liked, which they in a pet declined. However I have learnt two things from the days' adventures—never to stir twenty yards from my own door without flint and steel, and I have also got a light axe made to carry at my belt, and it has served me many a turn since; the other thing—never to turn any man from my house at night, and God knows I should have been hospitable upon this occasion, as the house I then kept was an open house. This same house, to which we retired when the men were gone, consists of three cedars and a butternut, covered with wild vine—very picturesque truly and very airy; and there it shall stand unharmed, if possible, amidst the general havoc, as a memento of my first landing; but as the road line, I find, runs over my very hearthstone, I may perhaps be compelled to have it down.

As soon as we had got our suppers, we got the canoe up to the fire and made it our roof. I gave Hay, as my guest, my best blanket, my waterproof and the choice of his bed, and I believe he slept pretty well; but as to myself my lair was on an inclined plane, so that as soon as I fell asleep I rolled out, and instead of sleeping under the canoe I slept under the drip of the canoe; as the fire had gone out, when I woke about one and my blanket was very thin, I felt considerably cold. I woke up the men and made them get another fire, and for an hour or two I amused myself toasting potatoes at it till I got dry, when I went to bed again and again acted the part of gutter to the roof till morning, though as Hay's snoring kept me a good deal awake I continued to keep up my post on rather better than in the earlier part of the night. But I must not grumble at Hay's comfortable sleep, for, though he had the better berth, he caught a cold and I did not.

The next morning, 27th Sept., it really became fine, and having taken my choppers to show them where to begin, I set out with Hay to show him some land on Cameron's Lake; but, a stiff wind being against us, we thought, when we got to the Falls, there would be no time to cross the Lake; so we returned to dinner and then set off on our return, land-hunting as we went. A most lovely afternoon compensated us for our fatigues, and we reached Need's to sleep.

Here I had intended leaving Hay and returning to my land, but, hearing that the steamer was not coming up and as Hay had no other way of getting down but my canoe, I determined to go down with him, particularly as I could do nothing on my land at present and as I wanted to get up the rest of my luggage. And here I remained wasting this precious season of the year, through the delays of the tradesmen, from whom I could get nothing done without continually teasing and urging them on, and partly in waiting for McAndrew and Jameson, my two nearest neighbours, who were detained from the same cause and with whom I intended to get my luggage up.

From the 25th Sept., when I arrived, to the 11th October, when I left Peterborough, I have nothing to record but that, on the 6th, McAndrew and I walked up to Selby,* about nine miles off, the intended site of a flourishing village, and were much pleased with the beautiful rapids upon which it is built, and that Hay not being able to get land in my neighbourhood suitable to his wishes has settled on Sandy Lake, for which I am sorry, as I was much pleased with him.

On Friday, the 11th, we set out to Mud Lake, being obliged to leave many things behind us, and got to the rapids at Bob-ca-je-won-unk (that is the spelling I think I shall adopt, *a* and *j* having the English pronunciation) that night. Here McAndrew and I found that the government scow we had intended to use was removed, so we volunteered our services and those of our men to assist Jameson up, if he would lend us his scow afterwards. Accordingly on Saturday morning (the 12th) we commenced unloading her of about seven or eight tons of goods, and got thirteen hands from the works, who, with us eight, had hard work getting her over the fall; above this we loaded her again, when it appears the hands from the canal wanted $16.00 for the whole job of getting her up the rapids, which for three-quarters of a day we thought a most exorbitant charge, so Jameson paid them $4.50 for what they had done, and we all turned into the water, resolving to get her up ourselves; but, after having been an hour working hard up to our middles in the water, we were obliged to give it up, and Jameson had to go over again and cry peccavi; the contractors, like the Sibyl of old, sent us only eleven men but still charged the same $16.00 in addition to the $4.50. We felt ourselves however in their power and were obliged to submit; but we now got up gloriously, as we all, being already wet, continued to help in the water. About the middle however the channel suddenly deepened so much that I was left behind unless I had taken to swimming. My first notice was seeing McAndrew, who is six feet two, put his watch in his mouth (mine had long been there) and the next moment I was up to the shoulders. Not relishing a swim, I left them and went on to prepare for their reception above, where I lighted a glorious fire in an empty shanty into which I effected an entrance *via* the chimney.

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* Now Lakefield.

The next morning being Sunday (the 13th), we wasted several valuable hours in shaving and such luxuries, and did not get off till ten—with our own party only—and as we unfortunately struck upon some rocks in the rapids, we had to jump out again, then the wind being very wintry, there arose a sort of contest who should take the oars to warm ourselves. However, what with the wind and what with our exercise, we were tolerably dry by the time we reached Cedar Point, where we resolved upon camping about an hour after dark. Here we experienced the wisdom of the Indian custom of encamping before sunset, for it was so dark that we lost much time in procuring suitable wood, and were half an hour in getting a light, all our punk being wet in our pockets. At last, with the assistance of gunpowder, we lighted a fire, but to me, as flint and steel bearer, it was at the expense of one whisker and both eyelashes. After an excellent supper of stewed duck and potatoes, we slept most soundly, McAndrew and I occupying a bed of cedar boughs near the fire, with a buffalo robe for mattress and another for a counterpane.

Next morning (the 14th) we roused Jameson and got him on one and a half miles to my land to breakfast. Here McAndrew and I stayed behind looking at my land and then followed to Cameron's Falls, where the scow was unloaded, and with our two men we brought her down, with a fair wind, to my place for dinner. Starting again at four, we reached Sandy Point soon after sunset, taking the precaution of calling at Cedar Point to carry away some of the embers, which were still smouldering from our last night's fire.

Next morning (the 15th) we were up before day break and pulling against a stiff breeze at sunrise. We reached the head of the rapids at ten and left our large scow there, going down to borrow a small scow from the works to bring up our luggage in two or three trips. McAndrew, with four hired hands, undertook the scow, whilst I remained getting a second load ready. Eight times they got round an island out of sight, and as often the current carried them back almost to their starting place; but at last they accomplished it and took up a second load. That night we slept in a bed and were so comfortable that we never were conscious till morning that our shanty, twenty by sixteen feet, contained twenty three other souls.*

On Wednesday morning (the 16th) we got up another load, and, with four extra hands, took the large scow up to McAndrew's to sleep. My man I parted with the day before, nominally because his wife asked too high wages, but really because I found him too old to be of much use as a chopper and too fond of whiskey to be very useful as a trusty servant, and I should have been without a man, if I had not accidentally met my old friend Dan'l O'Flynn in the woods carrying all his worldly property upon his back, consisting of a sheet, a blanket, a Bible and a † as he calls it. I do not remember whether I mentioned this individual in a former letter. The first time I was up the Lakes we observed a disconsolate figure, sitting on the shore, and thinking that he might be lost, we approached him; he informed us that he was one Dan O'Flynn who having been clearing his land in the rear for two months had come down to the lake shore for the chance of seeing a man. Ever since he has taken me under his especial patronage and has constituted himself my mentor and valet de chambre, requiring me, in re-

turn for these favours, to keep his money safe and never let him spend a halfpenny of it.

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* This inn, which was wanting in the first land hunting trips, was evidently built after the settlement was laid out by the Land Surveyor on Oct. 6. (see note p. 32). On that same day Need says, a hut was made for the site of a tavern. This site is later described as a flat rock, and there is a flat rock, of the size mentioned above, at the water's edge on the Rokeby side of the river, noted as McConnell's tavern in the cut on p. 173, which is no doubt the tavern floor of solid rock mentioned on p. 52.

† Undecipherable in the original.

It rained all night at McAndrew's, but, by erecting a sort of tent of blankets, we slept pretty dry under our buffaloes. The next morning (the 17th), with two of the extra hands and Dan, I set off for my own land, and after ranging my luggage under some cedars for the remainder of that day and half of the next, we employed ourselves in cutting a road from the landing, making my chopper's shanty our lodging.

By noon next day (the 18th), I had fixed upon my situation, which is at some distance from the Lake on the side of a hill, the shore being too much exposed and too low.

On Saturday (the 19th), the logs being all cut, we raised the walls, and on Sunday morning I set out with two men in my canoe to McAndrew's, who in the meantime had got on a little faster than I, having no road to cut. After breakfast he and I set out in my canoe to proceed up the Scugog into Ops to buy boards and potatoes. For two or three hours we were employed searching for the mouth of the river, which at last we found—about two and a half miles from where it is laid down in the maps, and, as we had fourteen to go up the river to the mills, it was dark when we arrived there.

The Scugog, for twelve miles of a very circuitous course, is one continued dismal swamp; the banks indeed are covered with trees, but between them, in spring at least, a canoe may pass. For the last two miles there begins to be a decided stream, and for the last an actual rapid between high and picturesque banks. At last it became so dark, and so difficult to thread one's way through the shoal of an unknown rapid, that we gave it up and landing we groped our way through the woods, till we fell in with a path which led us to the Mills, and, there being no tavern, we were received by Mr. Purdy the miller, a Yankee.

Purdy's mills have, I should imagine, the largest mill-dam in the world. It raises the water seven feet and makes a navigable communication, where none before existed, for thirty-seven miles back. It destroys seven mill sites and overflows 11,000 acres of land. Last year the dam gave way and the water was six months in running out, raising the waters of our lakes so high that for five weeks Col. Baldwin's mills (forty miles off by water*) were stopped from working. When the dam was mended, the Scugog river had no existence for three months, while the dam was filling. You may form an idea from these facts of the unhealthy and low nature of the land in the townships of Ops and Cartwright.

Next day (Monday the 21st) having bought our lumber and potatoes and arranged for their conveyance down, we returned, shooting ducks by the way, and slept at McAndrew's.

On Tuesday I returned home alone to breakfast and found the roof on my shanty; and on Wednesday we got the walls chinked and my luggage brought up. On Thursday the logs for the other shanty were cut, but for want of help we could not raise it. That same Thursday the 24th October I slept for the first time under a roof of my own.

On Friday the 25th in the morning Robert Gordon, with whom I fell in by accident and have engaged as my man for the winter, set out in the choppers' skiff and Dan and I in my canoe, to bring over help from McAndrew's. The skiff contrived to reach him, but Dan and I after proceeding about one and a half miles, found it quite hopeless for a canoe to live in such a tremendous sea, and were obliged to run for the nearest point where the waves would allow us to effect a landing. Here we employed ourselves in exploring until the wind abated sufficiently to allow us to make another run for my own landing. Robert attempted that night to come over but after being out two hours, baling with their hats they were obliged to put back.

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*On Pigeon Creek in the Township of Emily

On Saturday (26th) morning he arrived, rather late, with two hands but we never should have got the walls up had not the scow with potatoes and the raft of boards fortunately arrived, and even with their assistance we did not get them quite up—though all the heaviest are up and the rest carried to the spot.

On Sunday morning (27th) I set off with Dan and Robert to dinner at McAndrew's with the intention of proceeding here [Peterborough] the next day but about midnight arrived, with two friends Mr Hunter, with whom McAndrew and I went up the Lakes when we chose our land, so I could do no less than accompany him on to do the honours of my own house and up to Cameron's Falls getting to Needler's that night and to Peterborough the following (29th).

To-morrow (1st Nov.) at five o'clock I shall be on my way back with all the things I can get up but there will be some gleanings for McAndrew next week, and the next following we shall probably be shut up for the winter—so be not surprised if you do not hear of me again for a couple of months. The frost is always very severe if it will but hold off till my chimney is built I don't care

My Journal has been so long this time that I have no room for fifty things I had to tell you of my plans etc. At present I can only shortly tell you who are our society My nearest neighbour, at Cameron's Falls is Jameson, an agreeable gentlemanly Irishman, a great land speculator who will soon have a town about him. I remember him of old by sight in Liverpool where you will probably see him this winter The next nearest and my most particular friend is McAndrew a Scotch man from Elgin knowing Grant Duff John Morison etc. He has been a long time in Portugal. Opposite me, and perhaps nearer than McAndrew is a Mr and Mrs. Reaston but I have seen nothing but their house as yet. These are the only Fenelon men. In Verulam on our Lake, are Capt Warren and Athill of Trin Coll Dublin; the one a puppyish soldier the other gentlemanly but never can be agreeable till he gives up punning Opposite them, Mr Fraser of the army, a pleasant man enough, with a little Dutch wife He was shipwrecked in coming out and lost everything Besides these are the three old settlers, Need, D Arcee and Sawers. Then in Harvey there are Mudge and Hay, and two Trin Coll Dublin men, King and Evans; King a Jersey man an excellent scholar and great linguist Round this place [Peterborough] there are several young men, mostly Scotch and rather wild My next most intimate acquaintance is Joseph Hunter a Quaker from Belfast, who lives principally at Cobourg. As to ladies, the three Miss Browns and Miss Crawford are my only acquaintances And now farewell until sleighing time.

To his Brother

From my own house Jan. 9th, 1834

First let me wish you all the compliments of the season, and then apologize for the long period of my silence. My conscience however does not smite me much, as I not only wrote two letters upon the last occasion but gave fair warning that you might expect a long interval before you heard from me again. The post, as you must be aware, does not stop at my door and it is a long walk to go forty miles through the snow to put a letter in the Post Office at Peterborough. One opportunity indeed I had when I sent my man down, about three weeks ago, but I hastened his departure for the sake of giving him company on his journey and, though I still had two days' notice, this must serve as my excuse—I had just got into my new house and, as the thermometer stood at ten degrees, I was naturally extremely anxious to put in windows and doors before the cold increased; and, not to mention that I had no table, I had nothing but iron pens, in which the ink froze so fast as to render the writing even of a short note a work of considerable time and labour. However, to drop excuses, I am resolved to be ready for any chance opportunity to Peterborough, though at present in perfect ignorance how this is to reach any civilized portion of the province.

Your letter arrived by my man on his return [from Peterborough] on the day of all others when I least needed such a luxury. McAndrew was spending Xmas time with me; we had worked hard all day flooring the loft and reducing everything to order; a table had been manufactured out of a door and two empty barrels, a table cloth was airing at the fire, silver forks, mus tard, and such-like almost forgotten luxuries were ready to grace it; and last—not least—we were almost longing for bed time to luxuriate once more in the novelty of a pair of sheets. Such were the prospects of enjoyment before us when Robert returned with a handful of letters for each, and a bundle of old newspapers which some kind friend at Peterborough had sent to enliven our solitude. Imagine what an evening we spent. If they had arrived now, when sheets, table cloth, etc., are losing the charm of novelty, and I am sitting alone by my fire, the arrival would have been better timed. But I will read your letter over again and then answer it.

The most important topic in your letter, or at least the one which has run most in my head, is—the advantage and safety of a person in England investing money in Canada; with regard to which, after revolving the matter long in my mind, I have come to the following opinion.

Land, except to one residing upon it and cultivating it himself, can never, for many years to come, be looked upon as a permanent investment; for, from the facility of acquiring a freehold, a system of tenantry can never be introduced, at least with anything like favourable terms to the landowner, and even then it can be by no means common. Purchasing land is only a speculation for the purpose of selling it again, and it is the most profitable and certain kind of speculation that Canada holds out.

Land speculations are of three sorts, all profitable, but differing greatly in their nature. The first is confined almost entirely to storekeepers and married men in old and well settled townships, and is the way in which almost all our Canadian fortunes have been made. A storekeeper gives a long credit, or an attorney or banker advances money on mortgage to some needy and extravagant farmer, and, besides getting a good interest, generally ends in getting possession of his farm at half its value, and then speedily disposes of it to some new emigrant who is frightened of the discomforts of the woods and is glad to give a handsome price for a ready built house and a few acres of cleared land. These speculators know the circumstances of every farmer in the neighbourhood; they find a poor one and lend him money to be repaid when his crops come in, which they generally contrive to secure below the market price. The next year he wants a larger advance; the third year, after his crops have come to market, he has perhaps barely enough to buy his winter's stores; he talks of selling his farm, and tries to hold out till the emigrants arrive next year: but the emigrants barely get up the country till June, and before that time he has generally been obliged to sell at any price which the speculator may have the modesty to offer. There are no doubt many honourable men engaged in this kind of trade, and a good bargain need not be thrown away from pity to the necessities of the seller; but thus habitually to lie in wait to prey upon the distresses of others is too much like a rattlesnake waiting for a bird to drop into its mouth which its eye has already fascinated.

The second kind of speculation is—purchasing lands in quite new townships, which may frequently be done very cheap, either by contracting for the survey, or by buying of the surveyors, or of individuals to whom lands had been given by the Indians previous to the survey. But here there is a risk, as it is often long before a township begins to settle; for instance, this spring there was not a settler in this township, though it had been surveyed upwards of ten years.

The third, and only way of speculating I think of practising myself or would recommend to others is—to watch for a decided demonstration in a township towards settlement, and then go over it, and, having ascertained where the best land and best situations are, then to make your purchase. The next year or in two years at most, you may be certain of selling again at double the price, and even if you have bought a lot at hazard, if it is not actual rock or swamp and the situation is good, you are sure of a handsome profit. And observe, that a person who has paid all the purchase money and, not being in want of money, will receive payment by instalments with interest at 6 p. ct. will always have a preference over others. If a purchaser does not come soon, I am sure it would pay well to clear a few acres, build a small house and put a man to farm it on shares, and then in a year or two, when the lazy gentry begin to find their way up, you may sell it as a cleared farm.

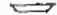
United Empire rights are also sources of considerable profit, but as our sapient Parliament has been legislating about them lately I know not how they may answer for the future. With mine, I mean to sell one hundred acres to an actual settler at a cheap rate, and when I get the deeds out, upon his having done the settlement duty, the other one hundred acres is held by as good a title as any other land. My neighbour Jameson is a very large speculator in them and will, I have no doubt, succeed very well.

For other modes of investment 6 or even 12 p. ct. may be obtained on mortgage on the very best security

Banks, railroads and public works pay well, but not proportionately as high as in England.

The only permanent investment which strikes me at present as very advisable is that of houses in towns—not in the hundred new towns which are advertised every day in the newspapers, but in a thriving, rapidly increasing place like Peterborough. House rent is enormously dear here; a house which costs £100, built on a town lot of half an acre costing about £25, would be the cheapest house in Peterborough if it did not bring a rent of £25, besides the annually increasing value of the town lot itself. Imagine in Peterborough, which in 1825 was an Indian encampment, land selling at 4/ a square foot, which about a quarter of an acre did this year.

With regard to the boat of which you offer to make me a present, I am at present pretty well stocked with these modes of conveyance.

My naval department consists of a canoe and a boat; the former of which I mean to sell in the spring and buy another more portable. I decidedly have not yet acquired the true Indian twist of the wrist, but I am a very tolerable hand and can face a very heavy swell or stem a rapid much to my own satisfaction. My boat is undoubtedly the happiest effort of the genius of our boatbuilder; it is light, being built of cedar, rows well for either one or two persons, and although flat-bottomed to suit our shallow shores, will I have no doubt sail pretty fairly by the aid of a leeboard which I am proposing to attempt. She is of considerable capacity too, having brought up six persons, three goats and some luggage from Peterborough. For heavier articles there is now on the stocks to be finished by the breaking up of the ice, a scow in joint concern between McAndrew and myself calculated to carry about three or four tons, which will serve us for some years to come. And what is a scow? I do not know whether the word is English. It is a species of flat-bottomed boat of which the ground plan is a rectangle, and this  the side view, rather a clumsy machine you will say, more especially if you saw the beams of wood, four inches by three and eighteen feet long, which serve as oars, but a London wherry with spoon oars is not in keeping in the woods, and we have made even such a craft as this carry a ton or two, at the rate of three and a half miles an hour for two or three hours at a stretch. In such a scow, belonging to Jameson, we have got our goods up from Bob-cajewonunk this year and next year we must do the same, for though the canal is progressing, the whole plan in my opinion is so radically bad that until it is altered entirely the steamer will never get up into Sturgeon Lake. From Peterborough to Bob-cajewonunk our goods are carried up at 2/ p. 100 lbs and storage at the rapids is 3d. p. 100 lb., from thence to our own houses we cannot estimate the expense at less than the same sum, even basing our calculations upon our last trip which was our most economical. At half past five I rowed down to McAndrew's and brought him up to Cameron's Falls, altogether about twelve miles. Jameson being absent, we rambled into the bush till he returned, and, after a late dinner, borrowed his scow and started about seven in the evening. Stopping at my house to take in our crew and get tea we rowed on, a great part of the way through ice, and reached the tavern at the foot of the rapids at four in the morning, very glad to go to sleep on the solid rock which forms the floor of the shanty. All the next day we were engaged in taking up our load by boat to the scow—which we had left at the top of the rapids about one and a half miles off—and carrying some doors and other awkward shaped articles through the bush. The next day we had one more trip up with the boat and then proceeded with the scow and reached my place before dark, performing the distance from Need's to McAndrew's, rather more than seven miles, in two hours. Our crew consisted of McAndrew and two of his men, myself and my boy, and of Jameson part of the way down.

I give you these details to show you that twelve barrels of flour and a barrel of beef are not got up either without labour or expense. Allowing McAndrew and myself 5/- a day for our work, which I am sure we deserved, the trip cost us about 2/- p. 100 lb., making in all about ½d. a pound upon every article which we got from Peterborough. But if this extra ½d. adds considerably to the cost of pork and flour, what will you think of a most unfortunate cargo of potatoes which we got from Ops, which, besides being frozen on the road, cost us at least 1/- p. bush. in freight, not to mention two days lost in going to buy them. I never was very fond of potatoes, but now I have an almost Cobbettish horror of the "Lazy root." Yet a requisite quantity of fat pork cannot be turned down without some vegetable matter to qualify it, and unleavened bread baked in a frying pan is but a sorry substitute for bread. True I have, or had, thirty pounds of beef and McAndrew very generously gave me half a bushel of turnips, but these are luxuries which I reserve for chance guests or such great occasions as Xmas or New Year's days.

As I am on the subject of eating, you may wish to know how we live in the backwoods. In the summer fish, ducks and venison are rather plentiful, but in winter, that is from November to April inclusive, salt pork is the standing dish for breakfast, dinner and tea, and a most expensive one it is, each member of my establishment consuming at the rate of one and a quarter pounds per day at 6d. p. lb. To make this pork go further I deal much in soups—potato soup is the favourite and is so much relished by my men that it has become the ordinary dish at breakfast. Should you wish to introduce it into your establishment, the following is the receipt. Take a lump of pork and, having peeled fifteen or twenty potatoes, put the whole with an onion into a pot and boil it until it has acquired the desired consistency. You may laugh, but I can assure you my potato soup is so celebrated that McAndrew desired me to bring my boy over one Sunday to teach his cook the mystery of the concoction. My pea soup is not so much admired, being merely hard black pease floating about in weak greasy broth. We tried a plum pudding at McAndrew's on Xmas day, but it was a decided failure, the currants and suet were scarce, the eggs entirely wanting, and flour by much the preponderating ingredient. We ate it indeed in honour of the day, but it was decidedly bad; however it had the desired effect of making a perfect Esquimaux of poor little Polyphemus, a one-eyed deformity who serves McAndrew in the office of valet, an amusing monster who, in addition to the extinction of his luminary, is marked with small pox, lisps most unintelligible Cumberland and has an unconquerable aversion to the use of a pocket handkerchief. Nevertheless, notwithstanding these our Canadian luxuries I have not forgotten an English dinner, and I am almost ashamed to say that visions do sometimes float before my imagination of the dinners I shall eat when I pay you a visit in Europe, but more especially with Prince Hal in Shakespeare "I do remember that creature small beer." Before that time indeed I may have become exclusively enamoured of salt pork and wedded to the use of lake water and that detestable stuff Canadian whiskey. Custom does a great deal, as in the case of tea. Being short of sugar, McAndrew and I agreed to stop it to the men, and to set an example gave it up ourselves; and as to milk,—pray never mention the word goats to me—milk was a thing we never dreamt of, but on Christmas we resolved to enjoy ourselves, produced the sugar and sent three men to get a pint from a neighbour I don't know how many miles off; we tried with both milk and sugar, and then with each separately, but finally unanimously resolved that pure unsophisticated tea is the best.

I have been rather lengthy upon the subject of eating, but without some allusion to that most important function I should have given you but a poor notion of my situation, and moreover because matters of cookery have assumed an additional degree of importance with me from my having officiated as cook myself for three weeks. I certainly did once roast a duck to charcoal and once burned the peasoup so much it was necessary to give it to the goats, but, upon the whole, when I handed over the frying pan and potato kettle to my boy Willie, I did it with the conviction that nature intended me for a great cook, great first because I have a genius that way, and secondly because I never could overcome my aversion to washing up dishes, etc.

And now I will leave cookery and eating, having first impressed upon you two economical maxims which I owe to Dan O'Flynn, whom I mentioned in my last letters, first, give your servants plenty of potato soup because, as he elegantly expressed it, it blows them out without much consumption of butcher's meat; and secondly, either allow them very little tea and then they will use less sugar, or give them no sugar and then they cannot drink the tea so strong.

Upon referring back I find that the origin of this culinary dissertation was the expense of bringing up stores, and I may add that this will be most materially diminished when we get our scow, which, being built lighter and on an improved construction, McAndrew and I can take down to Peterborough by ourselves in one day and bring it back in two.

The sleighing, about which we hear so much, is I am convinced impracticable for us who have no beaten track, at least unless the ice most materially improves. I have had experience of it once and do not wish to repeat the experiment. About seven in the evening I set [out] to bring home some forty or fifty pounds on a handsleigh from McAndrew's, a distance of four and a-half miles, and I cannot have been less than four-and-a-half hours on the road—the last mile, I am convinced, took more than two hours. An unlucky cramp seized one of my legs, which would not hold out more than ten yards without a rest, and when I was ready to start again the sleigh was always frozen to the snow; the worst of it was that I could not keep myself in exercise long enough to keep warm. The articles were too numerous to be carried, and sleigh and all they proved too heavy, so I had to trudge on as well as I could, for as to leaving the sleigh I did not like to be

Alexander McAndrew

beaten, and some of the contents were of so savoury a scent—no less a treat than a couple of dozen of red herrings—that I was afraid the wolves would be making free with them. To mend the matter, on my arrival about midnight, I found the fires out and my boy fled to the choppers for protection from the wolves, it being before the introduction of doors into my establishment. From this experiment I have come to the determination never to drag a sleigh again in deep snow, or if I do at least to perform my journey by daylight.

Talking of wolves, they are plentiful about, no doubt. McAndrew, who has an open view of the lake, has seen several and I have seen numbers of tracks, but I have never been fortunate enough to fall in with any, though one would have thought that the odour of my Billy-goat would have attracted them for miles round.

Your questions as to my neighbours have already been answered. The only one I see much of or care much for, at least when Jameson is away, is McAndrew. I don't know whether I mentioned that he is from Aberdeen awa, and knows Morison and some of Grant Duff's nephews and nieces, though I believe not the gentleman himself. He was many years in Lisbon and has a brother settled there, also a brother in Liverpool whose office is somewhere in Chapel Walks, I think. He came out originally with the intention of settling in business in Montreal. He is a very agreeable and useful neighbour. We came up together to look at land, bought it on the same day, have just the same quantity and have the same views with regard to it. All our stores have been bought and brought up together, and so much have all our motions been in concert as yet that I have a notion the good people in Peterborough believe us to be living together. We have almost lived together for this last three weeks and the result has been that, by mutual consent this morning (the 10th), we have agreed never to live so long at a time in our small house again, being aware of our natural infirmities.

As to the parentage, etc., of the rest, about which you enquire—Jameson is, I believe, the son of a wealthy brewer in Dublin; he brought out a good capital intending to enter into business but speculated in U. E. rights till he found he had gone so deep that he must become resident himself. Sawers is a silly boy. His father is a Lieutenant of Marines who it seems has married a sister of Don Miguel's friend, Sir John Campbell. Need's father is I suppose connected in some way with that extensive firm of Walker, Parker & Co. whose names are spread far and wide as manufacturers of patent shot.* D'Arcey's father, somebody told me, is or was Mayor of Cork or Londonderry or some such Irish place. Athill's papa is an Irish Dean. Captain Warren I never saw but once. Mr. Fraser was of the 42nd; he is a gentleman and is married to a nice little Flemish wife. I know nothing of his parentage but he is a Scotchman and poor, and so of course is highly descended. Mr. Wilson is a middle aged man, a very good soul. He is an Irishman, poor lad, they tell me, come of decent folk. I also hear that he ruined himself by endeavouring to procure a separation for a sister from a husband who used her ill. He is at present superintending Cameron's Falls for Jameson, in his absence, but will settle here. Next year we are to have a Mr. Boyce, of the army I believe, of whom Jameson speaks highly, and a Captain Dobbs, an agreeable gentlemanly elderly man of whom I know nothing more than that he is reported to be an excellent chess player, and, what is of much more importance, to be the father of six daughters. Such is the list of the inhabitants of the townships of Verulam and Fenelon.

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* Need's own account of himself, in the preface to *Six Years in the Bush*, is that he graduated at Oxford, with a view to one of the learned professions, but a strong desire to try his fortune in the West came over him, and his friends, though they did not encourage, did not thwart his resolution, but gave him assistance which enabled him to carry it into execution; which assistance appears to have been liberal.

Everything else must wait till to-morrow, as my candle will barely see me to bed and my fire has already expired, rather a strange occurrence you will say, on the 10th of January in this much abused climate, and that too in a house the walls of which are still full of holes which admit the light by day and wind enough at night to disturb most materially the equanimity of my candle.

11th. Before proceeding further I must vindicate this climate from the calumnies that have been circulated against it. They say, indeed, that newcomers never feel the cold; if so, it is an illustration of the saying that "God tempers the wind to the shorn lamb," for truly they have to submit to strange lodgings. But I maintain that Canada is no colder than England, whatever the thermometer may say to the contrary. True there are other outward and visible signs of cold, the ink freezes in your pen, the lather in your shaving brush, the latch of the door sticks to your hand, and the water has occasionally frozen in my glass at dinner; but, though the average height of the thermometer inside my dwelling is about a degree below the freezing point, I have never been really cold but once, when I

woke last Sunday at Cameron's Falls in the middle of the night and found that McAndrew had stolen the bed clothes.

In the other shanty in which I spent my first six weeks a piece of canvas represented a door and a hole in the roof the chimney windows were unnecessary in such a dwelling for such were the spaces between the logs that, when you were outside at night and the fire was bright, the shanty bore a striking similitude to a tin lantern* every motion inside was visible—just such a house as Cato would have wished to live in. My bed consisted of two buffalo skins one above and the other below and empty barrels chests, etc., served the purposes of chairs and tables Yet in the midst of this I never was cold and the two colds I have had, in consequence of sleeping in warm houses never lasted more than a week. Let anybody look at me now writing without my coat, (for it was only last week I took to wearing a coat at all and even now I only put it on after dinner) and dare to say that Canada is a cold country

Having answered all your queries, I must be as concise as possible as I have to walk down to McAndrew's this afternoon whose choppers are going to Peterborough to-morrow My establishment consists of two men, chopping by contract, whose shanty is a quarter of a mile off and one of whom has a wife who washes for me my man Robert (at eleven dollars per month) who has only to-day fairly begun chopping having been employed almost wholly as yet in plastering chimney-building and other odd jobs about the house and a boy William, who, besides cooking carry ing water, cutting firewood, etc., does a good deal of chopping. To these may be added two goats, though I am afraid the number will speedily be reduced to one, as I have been called away from my letter this morning to give surgical assistance to poor Billy, who I think has received his deathwound from the limb of a falling tree, which struck him between the horns. He can walk about a little, and his companion is now most affectionately caressing him and smelling at his wounded head, but I am afraid his case is a bad one. Should he die I will turn his carcase to more use than it ever was when living, by trailing it a mile or two over the Lake and then spend the night by it, wrapped up in a blanket, for a chance of a shot at the wolves.

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*The old fashioned tin lantern was without glass, the light streaming from innumerable small punctures in the tin walls

He shavate [he appears here to have spilled the ink over his letter]—But there is one advantage of the frost at least—that ink, if spilt, freezes before it can stain much—this looks like an exaggeration, but it is a fact.

It is astonishing what an immense quantity of work has to be expended even upon a small log-house before it is habitable. I have kept an exact account of our labours, and do not find, on a review, that much time has been lost, but in looking back at the whole I can hardly comprehend how three men can have been kept constantly at work for two months and a half in fitting up a house and a shanty. McAndrew, having had a carpenter for a month, has decidedly got the start of me in comfort, but having been burnt out at Montreal he does not require so many cupboards, shelves and lock up places, to stow away his luggage in, as I do. My almost constant work this winter will be carpentering. I am no great hand at chopping as yet, having

had very little practice, but I am often surprised at the dexterity with which I wield an axe in fine work, such as hewing and squaring logs.

Amongst my evening studies I may reckon an attempt to teach myself Indian, by the aid of a translation of the Testament; but, as I have to form my own grammar and dictionary as I go on, it is no easy task. It is anything but a concise language, as, from some specimens, I had at first imagined; a verse in Indian generally takes twice as many words as in English; and such words! Ten syllables is no unusual length; of which the root itself is perhaps only two, the rest being prefixes and suffixes, and, if I may coin such a word, interfixes; for two or three syllables seem sometimes to be thrust in between the disjointed syllables of the root—but I will tell you more about it in the spring. . . . . .

C—— enquires about the resources of the country, on behalf of a Captain Stuart. Without knowing the circumstances, I can only say, in general terms, that some part of Canada may be chosen as an advantageous settlement for everybody; but none, except such as have an independent income—as half-pay officers—or actual working farmers, will thrive well in an old settled part. The woods, the backwoods, is the place for everybody who has health and enterprise; and, in point of society, I have never heard of any part, with the exception of Blandford in the London district, and Moore, farther west still, which could compare with the back townships in the Newcastle district.

I have had the misfortune to break the main spring of my watch, and, in the absence of the sun, have been reduced to measure time by the consumption of fire wood and candle (three-and-a-half inches after dark is my tea time). This uncertainty of time has set me a meditating upon clocks, and many times I have longed for one of those 15/- Dutch clocks which go so well in England. If T—— were coming out, such a thing might be sent with him. If I had a watch I should not now have been writing almost in the dark, with my dinner yet to get and a walk of four-and-a-half miles over the Lake yet before me.

My books too I want out; all at least that appear worth the carriage. But above all, I want a companion. I must have a dog or I shall be reduced to introducing poor Billy into the parlour, notwithstanding his odour. A terrier is a good dog and a spaniel is not amiss; but the dog of all dogs for this country—and one which can scarcely be procured at all and then only second rate—is a hound. Only imagine our living on salt pork at 6d. per pound with the knowledge that 200 pounds of fat venison is running about close to, if you had but a hound to drive him into the Lake; and then fancy our longings for such an animal. A foxhound, if he has once been hunted, will not take well to deer; but there are such things as staghounds which are sometimes to be procured by diligent enquiries. I once mentioned the thing to McAndrew and he was so much taken with the idea of our each having one that I have no doubt his first enquiry when I bring this letter will be, whether I have alluded to the noble animal.

These things I am afraid, are only delusions of the imagination, but I throw them out as hints for your private meditations.

To his Father

York, Feb. 3rd 1834

I found so much inconvenience, in my last letter to William, from writing without any systematic arrangement the multifarious subjects upon which I had to treat, led me into such long digressions that I must return to my old plan of first telling you my personal adventures in chronological order and then of answering the numerous queries which your long and welcome letter contains.

The first occurrence of any note, since my letter was an accident of much more importance than that which befell poor Billy who, by the bye is recovered. One of my choppers had his arm broken by the fall of a tree. I was at McAndrew's at the time, but upon being sent for returned with him and set the arm. I was the operator, but was very glad to have McAndrew's advice and opinion. The fracture was luckily above the elbow, and my patient is now convalescent and as far as I can see the arm is as good as ever.

Up to the 22nd of January with the exception of this accident, I have nothing to record. I was constantly employed in carpenter work and increasing the comforts of my house whilst the chopping was going on steadily but the 22nd was quite an era amongst us. I had gone down to McAndrew's to get back some tools, and we were looking down the Lake and admiring its beauties when we discovered two figures at a distance, evidently a white man and an Indian. Never having been three months in the backwoods without seeing a new face, you cannot enter into our delight; and if you had seen us looking at ourselves in the glass and capering about the house, you would have taken us for madmen. Our glee indeed was rather sobered when we discovered seven other figures on the opposite shore and began to meditate upon our accommodations. To cut the matter short, the party presently arrived, consisting of Jameson, whom we had imagined in England, Mr. Wilson of Cameron's Falls, Mr. Wallis, a friend of McAndrew's and partner of Mr. Bellingham to whom General Walsh gave me a letter, Messrs. Macredie, McCall and Hughes, three new arrivals, two Indians and a boy—a pretty considerable party for the backwoods. However, as the most of them had blankets, we contrived to lodge them pretty well, and as to eating, a huge piece of beef with turnips (our great luxuries) had been put into the pot when we first perceived them. Any wants in the establishment were easily overlooked, on account of the shameful inhospitality they had met with from our neighbours below. I have hinted already at this fault in our neighbours, but the present case was far worse than any we ever experienced. From this sweeping censure I must except Need in the present instance—he was from home—and D'Arcey, who is very kind hearted and does not seem to propose turning savage.

The next day the whole party visited me. The day following we moved up to Cameron's Falls and took a ramble over Cameron's Lake. On the 25th we set out for Balsam Lake, which looks even prettier in winter than in summer. Bushwalking in winter is rather hard work, particularly for those who like me could not get their boots on and were obliged to put up with worn out moccasins, which, except for the appearance of the thing, is much the same as walking in one's stocking feet, but a dinner of porcupine repaid us for all our fatigues. It is a most delicious dish, not unlike sucking pig, but with much more flavour. The next day we sent the two Indians on to Purdy's mills, to get us a sleigh on to Peterborough, and we slept once more at McAndrew's. He and I had been sometimes talking of going down to Peterborough for a few days, and we now took the present opportunity of having company on the road.

The next morning early we set out, and so much time was taken up in packing, etc. that most of us got no breakfast. The Scugog being a very winding river, four or five miles are to be saved by cutting through the bush in some places, and the ice being bad, the last three miles are also through the bush. The tracks of our Indians of course were to be our guides, but, there having been a considerable fall of snow during the night, it was often a matter of great difficulty to discover them. [illegible] You will have some idea of the fatigue of the walk when I tell you that there was near two hours space between the arrival of the first and the last of our party, though the distance scarcely exceeds ten miles. [illegible] after [all] I doubt whether it is not still more fatiguing in summer.

The rest of our journey to Peterborough was performed in a sleigh, of which I took the dimensions from curiosity, viz., five feet seven-and-a-half inches by two feet nine inches, into which seven of us and the driver were stowed, and occasionally our two Indians. Considering that McAndrew and Macredie are upwards of six feet two inches by exact measurement and the other four, except Jameson, more than six feet, I think this is a specimen of packing from which Mr Herty might have taken a lesson.

Having staid for a ball at Peterborough [illegible], I rode one of Wallis's horses down to this place. My business down here—to get the bonds, etc., of my U. E. rights—has been satisfactorily arranged, and I might return to my fireside again if my friends here did not detain me a little longer. We are in hope of acquiring two new neighbours in persons of McCall and Macredie, and I am remaining here until, having seen the owner of a front lot before some land which we could procure for them, they will decide whether they will purchase or not. In case they do, I am to make arrangements for them for building houses, clearing land, etc., before the spring, when they will come up, making a tour of the west in the meantime. To-morrow will probably settle the matter. They are both extremely desirable settlers. McCall is a young man of some independent income, very quiet and gentlemanly and has been somewhat of a traveller. The other not so well off in worldly matters but very well informed upon most subjects, very good-natured and exceedingly amusing from his simplicity and utter ignorance of the wickedness of this world, which in a person six feet two-and-a half inches and upwards is more particularly ridiculous. He is acquainted with the Hays, as is also Wallis. Hughes, who is not with us here, is a Cockney and very amusing in his way, has been in Italy, at Sorrento, etc. etc., a great admirer of the French and French philosophy without a particle of anything in him deserving the name, very sentimental, but withal an agreeable person, a German scholar moreover and a chess player. He is not yet decided as to his location, but it appears not improbable that he may buy some of my land and increase our neighbourhood still more. Wallis, who brought them all up to us, is quite a first rate person, but I will say no more of him as you will see him in Liverpool soon and judge for yourself. He is a much more decided person than Jameson and is not likely to disappoint me again; in fact I believe he is going to establish a house in Liverpool, in connection with that at Montreal, and has offered to be instrumental in forwarding my parcels, etc., for me.*

To-day, (the 4th), I have been to see our provincial Parliament, who certainly are not an imposing body and do not seem to be more celebrated for talking to the point than their prototypes at home; but in one thing they have effected an improvement upon our English forms; when a division takes place, the Ayes stand up in their places and a little boy calls out their names in order, each sitting down as his name is called, the Clerk at the table taking their names down; the same is repeated with the Noes, and the lists are then handed to the Speaker, who declares the majority. Another plan is good;—each member has his own seat with a small desk before it.

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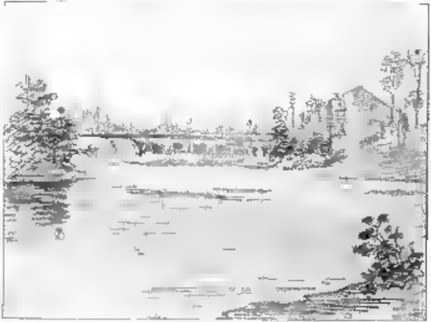
*James Wallis, later of Merino, Peterborough, became a life-long friend. He came to Canada in 1832 and engaged in a mercantile business in Montreal. This first visit to Cameron's Falls was no doubt preliminary to a partnership with Mr Jameson which was arranged soon afterwards. Together they built a saw-mill at the Falls. Mr Wallis at the same time purchased eight or ten thousand acres in the township of Fenelon. The mill continued in operation until 1858 when it was burnt down. Mr Jameson was seldom at Fenelon Falls and he returned before long to Liverpool and died there. Mr Wallis, though he kept his house at Fenelon Falls did not reside there continuously after 1840, when he took a house in Peterborough. The superintendence of the mill was in the hands of Major Maclaren. Merino, Mr Wallis's residence at Peterborough was built in 1851 when he married Miss Forbes, daughter of Commander Robert Millar Forbes, R.N. who settled in Peterborough about 1827. His first wife, who was Miss Janet Fisher appears in these letters later. Mr Wallis died at Merino in May 1883.



FENELON FALLS WITH THE MILL

Pencil drawing by Anne Langton

To-morrow I hope to get the affair about the land settled, and to call upon the Governor to present him a petition upon the subject of a road through our township, and then I shall be ready to return home.

In your remarks upon the relative advantages of my township and that of Adelaide I am surprised that such a determined foe to monopolies could imagine for a moment that the Canada Co.'s management could be an advantage to the latter. The fact is that Adelaide does not belong to the Co., but, if it did, from all accounts it would be in much worse hands than those of Government. From what I have heard from those who have been in the Co.'s possessions they are most shamefully neglecting a very fine country, and jobbing is there carried on to a much greater extent than in the Government districts. Indeed of late years there is nothing worthy of the name of a job; every [thing] seems to be conducted upon the fairest principles. We have certainly more land speculators amongst us, but they, especially when they deal in U. E. rights, are often an advantage. Jameson, for instance, in order to make his speculations answer, must bring at least fifty working families into our township next year, or at any rate the following one. As to Adelaide and the new western townships in general, I learn from gentlemen interested in them and now in York that the want of water and pine timber is even more felt than the distance from a market. The land I believe to be superior to ours, and the winter not so long; but I am perfectly content with what I have got. The locks at Bobcajewonunk are constructing, I believe, at the expense of the District, assisted by a loan from the Province to almost the whole amount, to be repaid out of the tolls. As to the remainder of the communication the opening of the Trent is an affair which we can hardly expect yet. The surveyor is at present engaged in making his report, but the result has not yet been made public. I heard however to-day from a very good authority that the upper part is to be opened next year so as to extend our inland navigation about thirty miles; the remainder will be a work of great expense and it seems to be the opinion that it will be carried into effect by a company assisted by Government. In the meantime two bills have been brought in to form companies for connecting Rice Lake with Cobourg by a railroad, and with Port Hope by a canal. I spoke the other day with the surveyor and engineer of the latter line, who had completed their line within half a mile, and both agreed in saying there would be no great obstacle to the work. The bill for this canal I think almost certain to pass.

From Sturgeon Lake to Cameron's Lake is a rise of about 30 feet, and the land between being limestone rock will make the locks expensive—at present they are not thought of. From thence to Balsam Lake the rise may be about four or five feet, but the river is so shallow and the banks so low that the last three-quarter of a mile must be a canal. Balsam Lake and Lake Simcoe are pretty nearly on a level, and, for canoes, only seven miles in one place and three in another are portages. The Lake Simcoe people talk of opening this by a company; but, until the Trent or the Port Hope Canal [is finished] I do not think there will be any work, above Bobcajewonunk, and even there I fear our steamer will scarcely pass until late next summer.

At present you see everything is in embryo; but, before I have any crops to sell, I have no doubt the six or seven miles land carriage at Peterborough will be all that interrupts my water communication with Montreal.

I am not surprised at your feeling uneasy about my U. E.'s, as the low price must have given you some fears as to the validity of the title, but be assured they are groundless; the practice of selling them has long been permitted by a fiction of the law, and, although contrary to the original intentions of the Government, the necessity of putting actual settlers on each lot has been found to accelerate the settlement of a township so much that no obstacle is now thrown in the way of it, at least in our part of the Province.

I have now 400 acres of them in the back of my land, for 200 of which I shall be able to get out my deeds next summer, in consideration of my own settlement. I have also secured the lot intended for B——, meaning to sell it again to a desirable neighbour, merely covering my own outlay, which is much below what land now fetches in Fenelon.

As to the desponding which you seem to expect I shall feel in long winter evenings, I can assure you you need feel no alarm; I never felt so little inclined to despond in my life. Your fears lest we should grow bearish in our manners are, I think, needless—at our end of the lake at least; our dress, of course, is not in the style of a town dandy, but we have agreed to keep up a degree of form which sometimes amuses me when I look round on the accompaniments of the scene. You all seem to run upon the subject of danger, as if we were exposed to any here; the fact is, with ordinary precaution, there is nothing in the life of a backwoodsman which is worthy of the name. Fatigue and inconvenience there is in abundance, but danger none, and, as far as I have seen of the two former, there is nothing which novelty, at present, does not make rather pleasant than otherwise, and to which custom hereafter will [not] reconcile us.

I must hurry through the rest of your queries in order to go and drive a bargain, before dinner, with the owner of the land I wish to purchase for McCall and Macredie.

Our iron stoves are truly detestable; mine I rarely use, except when there are more than one in my house, for there is only one warm corner beside the fire. My chimney is a most rude hill of stones and mud and wood, of a very angular shape, and throws out no heat except immediately in front; but I console myself because it draws admirably.

You ask about the sturgeon in our lake, but the name is a *non lucendo*. Our Indians, the Mississaugas, were originally settled near Niagara, where there are plenty of the fish, and, upon coming up here, they gave the lake the name it now bears—*Namé*—I know not why.

You suggest sending me out an assortment of articles from England. I do not approve of the plan. The difficulties and expense of getting them up would be very great; any trifles we may want we can get from the large stores in York cheaper than we could get them up ourselves from Montreal. Pork is our greatest expense, and this we shall get cheaper this year, as McAndrew and I have ordered thirty barrels between us, which Wallis, who is on his road to Ohio to speculate largely in the article, will let us have at prime cost. What we do not want ourselves, our neighbours will take from us. In the same manner we are proposing to do with oxen, which we must get in spring. One or other of us will go over to Rochester, with a man who knows the points of an ox, and bring over six yoke from thence for ourselves and others on the Back Lakes.

Your Almanack must be wrong in the date of our land sale, or more probably there was some confusion in my date, for, from the length of my letter, I frequently take advantage of a spare hour to begin a letter, and finish it on a subsequent day without notifying the change of date. At any rate I not only bought the land in question at 10/, but got my deed for it yesterday, being a long parchment document which I dare say cost the Government twice as much as they received for the land.

By the bye that reminds me of your long tirade against jobbing. Some few snug jobs, in a quiet way, no doubt are to be found here as elsewhere, but, as far as land is concerned, as Canning said to L. Brougham, you have thrown away a most excellent stock of indignation; the most sharp-sighted leader of the Opposition could find no fault at present. One small remnant of a job is all that is to be perceived in our back townships, though the old ones are still suffering from the effects of the good old system; the surveyors are paid by a percentage of the land and their portions ought to be chosen by ballot, but it would seem that in this operation Fortune contrived to get one eye from under the bandage, for the frontages are generally the lots first drawn. Our township however was surveyed as far back as 1826. One other transaction annoyed me a good deal, and perhaps I may have alluded to it in some of my letters, but I believe that now we have no cause to complain:—Government officers ought, I think, to be incapacitated from speculating in land, but the land in question was bought by Mr. McDonell fairly at public auction; and if he got it cheap it was simply that no one liked to bid against one who is so generally liked for a favourite lot.

Since I mentioned the Parliament before I have paid our legislators another visit and have heard a long rigmarole from the two leaders of the Opposition; one of them commenced as follows: "Several Honorable gentlemen has rose in this 'Ouse"—a very fair sample of the whole oration; I feel myself fast growing a Tory. There is a singular incongruity in the *tout ensemble* of the House; the court dress and sword of the Sergeant at Arms and the cocked hat of the Speaker (instead of a wig) all seem as if intended to look imposing; but the appearance of the members themselves, writing their letters or reading their newspapers at their several desks, whilst a little boy is running about, bringing them plates of sandwiches, etc., reminded me much of a coffee house. During the whole of the five or six speeches I listened to, not a single member appeared to think of anything but his own business and, when one speaker sat down and another rose, very few even condescended to look up from their papers to see who it might be.

I am just going out again to endeavour to get my two friends settled and will keep the letter open to tell you of the result.

After lingering about the government offices all day I have at last put the thing into a train which I hope will be successful. Macradin at any rate I think certain.

The Port Hope Canal Bill has passed both Houses.

To his Father

Fenelon, Feb 2 1834

I forget whether I told you that I had traced the owner of the land I was in quest of to a person residing in Niagara. McCall and Macredie were going there and certainly they might have enquired after the land themselves but they seemed so undecided that I was afraid to lose sight of them and then on their return, if they had determined on the thing they would have nobody to assist them in getting choppers, etc. In short, after some deliberation I decided to accompany them, and with Wallis we set off in a waggon and reached Hamilton the second day. That evening Wallis and I went to Dundas. As you are so full of geology I suppose I must make some remarks upon the subject. Of course you have heard of the theory that Lake Ontario was formerly much above its present level; indeed I cannot conceive how any one who has seen the extensive plain sixty or seventy feet or more above the Lake which is bounded by a most remarkable ridge, clearly traced from some 20 miles east of York to Niagara and thence to Rochester, can doubt of it. The Lake in those days must have had a very deep bay at Hamilton, for the ridge there runs back into the country a long way, forming an extensive valley of from two to three miles broad in which Dundas is situated. Down the plain between these ridges run three or four deep ravines winding through it and constantly crossing the roads. At the bottom of these is again a smaller plain with a stream winding through it, a perfect counterpart of the larger plain and ravines. I should imagine this betokens two distinct descents of the Lake; perhaps there was one still earlier, for the land on the top of the great ridge is almost a dead level for many miles until bounded by the higher land behind and is scarcely above the level of Lake Erie. If the two were ever joined what a magnificent Fall there must have been in those days somewhere on the St. Lawrence. Niagara looks as grand as ever—perhaps grander from its gigantic icicles, but the surrounding scenery loses most of its charms.

The next day we returned having been six days on our tour. Wallis went on to Ohio. The land after all was not to be had but McCall determined to buy the front and be contented with the remainder of his land behind at some distance. At York we found Jameson and all returned together. I with Jameson in his sleigh and the other two driving up Wallis's. Sleighing surely is not the correct name for the mode of travelling that day: there has been no snow on the ground for ten days and six inches of mud did not make up for the loss: however we proceeded in hopes of reaching Windsor* whence we proposed [blank in the original] back by the Scugog. But after eighteen miles walking alongside of our sleighs it grew dark and we were obliged to put up at a tavern in Pickering. From here we struck back into Uxbridge, having some tolerable sleighing after the first ten miles from the Lake. The next day one of our sleigh runners, being worn out by the bare roads, gave way and detained us so long that we could only reach a miserable farmhouse in Brock. The following day on the confines of Mariposa we broke down in such a way that no blacksmith could ramp us up again. Committing the pole and our luggage to the other sleigh we mounted the horses until after five or six miles we fell in with a sort of vehicle called a jumper which we purchased for the enormous sum of half a dollar. With our pole which we strapped on and a basket of mine for a seat we considered ourselves fortunate and drove in grand style to Purdy's Mill that night. You will not form any very high idea of a jumper from the price we gave, but I can assure you it is a most admirable conveyance and most properly called a jumper. Why it should differ so much from other sleighs I do not know but a better practise for learning a hunting seat cannot be imagined. It sticks at nothing; wherever the horses can scramble the jumper can leap after them. We certainly fell off several times at first but at last we gained such confidence that, approaching Purdy's Mills, we resolved to show off, and putting the horses to full speed, successfully cleared a sawlog or two and a heap of firewood and finally deposited ourselves in the mud just opposite Purdy's door, to the no small amusement of a crowd of bystanders. Next day we continued our journey, but had not proceeded three miles when it became evident that we had trusted too much to the jumping powers of our carriage; its best days were clearly over—one of the runners was on its last legs; no blacksmith however was required here; an axe and an auger were all the tools wanted and in about an hour we started again, though from our inexperience of the art of carriage building the runner was but weakly. We now no longer went out of our way to jump logs but with all our care we broke down once more, and as the other sleigh had gone on we were obliged once more to take to our horses leaving our luggage behind. Two or three and twenty miles on bare backs with the additional pleasure of harness were enough to teach us for the future not to jump too high, and though I shall not cease to up

hold the excellence of jumpers I will be content with exhibiting them on a level road and not attempt to clear sawlogs again.

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* The former name of Whitby

On arriving at Peterborough we found a Bachelors' Ball in preparation which went off with great éclat. I certainly never expected on coming to Canada that I should be one of the Bachelors who gave a ball to between eighty and ninety, and meet with two of the best waltzers I ever figured with. A tremendous thunderstorm luckily coming on we kept it up with unabated vigour till daylight, as there are no covered carriages in Canada. After the ball, McAndrew and I with our new neighbours hired a sleigh to Purdy's and the same day reached his house soon after dark. The next morning early I set out in hopes of finding my people in bed, but upon more mature consideration dawdled by the way in order to find them at breakfast. I arrived about eight but it seems I had been discovered on the Lake, the bird I wanted to find had flown. My house had been opened in my absence upon the plea that my property was getting damaged in consequence of the wet getting in during the thaw. Yesterday I made no remark but I made my own researches and persuaded the man whose arm I set to tell me what had been going on, and the result is this:—My gun and one of my buffalo robes have been used and my skates are at this moment in my worthy servant's box, about one pound of tea and two of sugar have evaporated, my whiskey has been tapped, to what extent I know not, and what is the worst of all, and what I expected, having dreamt of it at Niagara, I have been keeping a great Scotchman for three weeks and he had not left my shanty five minutes when I arrived. The King's evidence is not to be brought in if possible and my own discoveries are not very important but I have great hopes of the skates bringing something to light. To-morrow morning I shall hold a court of inquiry and dismiss them both immediately. The boy I may dismiss at once, but the man is engaged till the 1st of May. If I can bring all home to him of course I need not pay him his wages beyond to-day; but if my man will not inform, I can only bring positively the opening my house and using my gun and buffalo robe home to him, and I question whether he may not compel me; at any rate he shall sue me for it; but I have great hopes in the skates. Whatever may be the result of my judicial labours to-morrow they must both go and I do not mean to have another servant till the new emigrants begin arriving when I shall take a man and his wife. My choppers are going down in a week or so and will not be back till the end of next month but I care little for that; I have lived long enough in the woods to be quite contented alone, my washing being the only thing I have an objection to do myself, and that I can get done by McAndrew's woman. I shall bake bread and boil a mess of potato soup twice a week, and the latter warmed up and cold pork will satisfy me; chopping firewood will be a pleasant variety. McAndrew will come over occasionally to see if I am alive and I shall invite McCall and Macredie to spend a day or two and initiate them into some of the mysteries of the backwoods. I rather enjoy the thoughts of the thing, but nevertheless I wish I had a dog. To-morrow I shall give you more particulars. I must now turn my attention to airing my bed, for last night, after my work was done, I was so sleepy that I preferred a blanket on the

floor, being the 13th night since I had my clothes off save one intervening night.

March 7th 1834. The day after I concluded my last I got rid of my establishment without having to call in any evidence. The skates, it seems, had been borrowed by the boy and taken from him by the man to hold over him in terrorem in case he told tales. A mutual recrimination, when they were asked for, let out many secrets, so I paid them their wages and dismissed them at once, no objections being made. I am sorry for the boy who I believe was only in fault as to going out skating one day, but I could not have kept him alone. It seems that the very day I went away my house was broken open. Ever since I have been alone, with the exception that the day before yesterday the three Macs came to dine with me. I cannot say I am tired of my solitude yet, though the washing up and the baking of bread are not occupations for which I feel any fondness, however I dare say I shall have enough of it before I get a servant again.

When I left off at the end of the former sheet I imagined that I had a great deal more to say, but I can only remember now one commission. Indian corn though the most profitable crop that there is when it succeeds has, particularly of late years, failed so generally throughout Canada on account of the late frosts that it is but seldom grown. Now I remember Mr Parr speaking of a variety which they grew in the north of Italy which from its only requiring about fifty days to come to maturity he called I think "Cinquantara." If by means of him or of any one else you could procure me some seed, I think you might not only benefit me but the whole of Canada—a glory which I think should recompense you for your trouble.

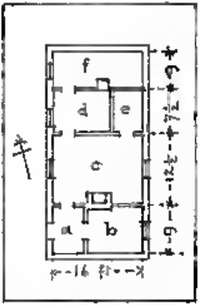
LIFE ON THE FARM

LETTERS OF 1834 AND 1835

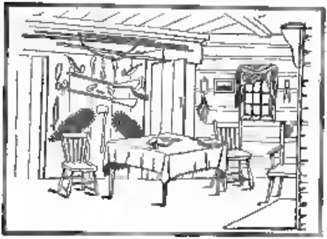
To my Father

Fenelon, April 4th, 1834

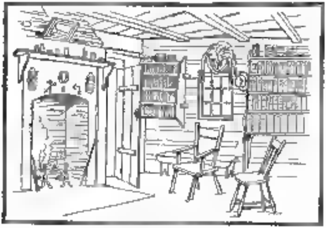
The great disadvantage of being at such a distance after that of not seeing you is that even by letter one cannot satisfactorily carry on a conversation. This truism has been elicited from me by the perusal of your letter of the 10th of December, which only reached me last week. The letter in answer to which you wrote was written I believe at the end of October, and it conveyed, I have no doubt, an accurate representation of my ideas and feelings at the time of writing, but your answer finds me with five months greater experience of the country and with views and feelings altered in many respects. We do not converse upon equal grounds, and I may add that during five months I have forgotten many things to which I alluded in my previous letter and hardly understand your allusions to them in your answer. I am sure that my letters must often appear to be full of inconsistencies, at least if they are at all faithful pictures of my mind at the several times of writing, for the earlier ones were written of course in very considerable ignorance of the subjects I treated of, and the new lights which break in upon me from time to time often make great changes in my modes of thinking. In reading over my journal of my first months in Canada I have been surprised at the errors into which I have fallen; my letters home, being written at greater intervals will I dare say be more correct, but still I have no doubt you will have detected the inconsistencies to which I allude. Upon the subject of my house, the plan will stand thus.—



a Entrance,
b Workshop
c Sitting room,
d Bedroom
e Store room, from which are the entrances to the cellar and loft,
f Bedroom, a great part of which will be occupied with my chests, trunks etc., and cupboards to hold linen and other articles. The roof of the house is now simply of boards not imbricated but nailed on lengthwise and a copious admission of rain is the consequence. As soon as the business of the barn is over I mean to get the roof shingled. The new roof and a fresh coat of mud in the interstices of the logs is all that I shall do, as I look upon it only as a temporary habitation for a couple of years, for from the hurry I was in, it is but a poor affair and not worth any alterations, and besides is not in the situation which would be most desirable.



Interior of Cottage looking North



Interior of Cottage looking South

—Drawings by Anne Langton

Your observations upon servants generally are pretty correct, but I do not, as far as I have yet seen in my own and other establishments, see much difficulty in managing them; but here as in everything else *in medio tutissimus* is the only rule. The working classes here naturally feel an independence which you do not find at home, and which, if you give way as some do, will soon lead them to consider themselves your equals; others again, by endeavouring to keep them under, as they call it, only give rise to insolence and make themselves cordially hated. But I have never seen any yet who by a quiet reserve of manner cannot be kept respectful. At particular moments and with particular characters you may unbend occasionally and thereby make yourself liked without losing any authority. The art of managing servants is perhaps the most important one a new settler has to learn. I do not mean to say I am perfect in it, but when I say that, out of the seven people I have at different times had, I never found any difficulty except with one, you must not suppose me the worst manager; and he who did give me annoyance was in all important matters managed easily enough, but in trifles and when not at work too much inclined to be free and easy, which considering that we had lived in the same shanty for six weeks and that I for a great part of the time had acted the menial part of cook, scullion, etc., is not much to be wondered at.

I think all your questions about my land have been answered in my former letters, but I will tell you what new discoveries I have made. In the first place I must explain to you how the land is surveyed, to make you understand the difficulty of—what may appear to you a simple affair—ascertaining the boundaries of a lot.

Starting at the base of a township the surveyor runs the concession lines by compass, blazing the trees here and there along the line, and planting a post at the points where the imaginary lines which divide the lots cross the concessions. The concession lines run N 17½° W and the side lines I am told are not exactly perpendicular. The shores of the lake are surveyed in a very slovenly manner, so that no dependance can be placed in the supposed contents of the broken fronts, and the position of the creeks, etc., appears to be laid down merely by guess. Now walking through the bush at the best is hard work and in a swamp where the fallen trees lie upon one another in double and treble tiers and you can with difficulty see ten or twenty yards before you, it is not easy to proceed at a greater rate than a mile an hour. Moreover the blazes are now, I believe, eleven years old, many of the blazed trees are fallen, and in others the bark has covered up the wound; in difficult places they are generally very sparingly and irregularly scattered; add to which that many of the posts have entirely disappeared, and you will have some idea of the difficulty of the operation.

When I first came up I was fortunate enough to stumble upon the line between X and XI and the post between lots fifteen and sixteen, and with this guide I commenced building on the best situation I could find on what I knew must be my land. I had promises from two different surveyors during the winter to come up and run the lines, but neither made their appearance, and trusting to their coming and deterred by the difficulty of wading through three feet of snow whilst everything you touch precipitates a deluge of the same material down the back of your neck from the branches above, I never did anything towards surveying during the winter. Thus when I last wrote I knew nothing further of my possessions than at my first arrival.* During this last fortnight, however, I have taken advantage of the fine weather which has cleared off most of the snow, whilst the ice on the swamps is still strong enough to bear one—at any rate oftener than it lets one through into the water—and I have gained much more definite ideas than I formerly possessed.

I first discovered the boundary line of the two townships—no easy matter when your only chance is to take a walk through a thick forest in the hopes of seeing a tree from which a piece of bark about the size of your two hands has been cut eleven years ago (or nine—I don't know the date to a certainty) and these trees scattered in a line at twenty or thirty yards apart. However, I found it and pursued it a considerable distance both to the north and south but without finding a post, and with the other line which I had found in autumn I was not more successful. I now adopted a more tedious but surer plan: inviting Macredie to stay with me I started from the post I already knew, and measuring the line carefully I found the fourteenth post, the extreme south of my land; then striking off to the east by compass I fell in with the boundary line and finding the fourteenth post after a minute search rooted up and leaned against a tree at some distance from the line, we measured on again and successfully ascertained the position of the other posts as far as my land went. The result of this examination was in many respects far from satisfactory and left still much to be ascertained. The next step towards an accurate knowledge of my land was to resurvey the shore in which there is certainly in one place an error and upon the correctness of which of course the contents of my broken front will depend. For this purpose I manufactured an instrument to serve me as a theodolite which of course was but a rude instrument and I consequently felt doubtful of the accuracy of my observations, but when upon calculating them I found that one distance which I measured by two perfectly independent sets of triangles as a test turned out by one 923.6 yards and by the other 925.4 I began to place as much reliance upon my survey as upon the Government maps. From these data I have drawn a map of the coast, but from not having ascertained with precision at what points the concession and side lines strike the Lake I cannot at present correct them. All this looks very easy on paper but in practice, including a long day's post hunt for Mr. Wilson and another expedition to run the line between X and XI S. to the Lake as a guide to McAndrew, it took up a whole fortnight and so completely deranged the regularity of my hours that one day we did not breakfast till twelve and dined at nine.

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* It seems that the remarks, at the beginning of the letter about the difficulty of conversing at a distance, were drawn forth by a criticism, in the letter he is answering, upon his having bought his land without having ascertained its boundaries.

Since I have been left to myself my motions have been as like clockwork as those of a man who has no watch can be. I rise at an hour varying from five to seven. Having dressed I clean the house whilst the kettle is boiling and after breakfast I smoke a cigar and read as long as it lasts. I then wash up the accumulated plates, etc., of the twenty four hours and set to work at chopping firewood, joinering or whatever may be in hand at the time. At an hour before sunset, which I have come to calculate very accurately, I begin cooking, bringing in a pile of firewood, sweeping out the house, etc., in the intervals, and I rarely fail to have finished my dinner just as it gets dark. Another cigar's time is then devoted to meditation and digestion, and after reading, writing or sewing for half a candle I go to bed. My baking, which is performed in a frying pan before the fire, requires constant attention, so I superintend that in the evening, having kneaded the dough during my cooking hour. In such a mode of life there is nothing to occupy the space of a letter; and here at McAndrew's, where, as there is no one left to endanger the sanctity of my dwelling, I have been spending a week, we are quite as methodical. He and I, who sleep on the floor, rise at 5.30; Macredie and McCall, who as strangers have the beds, are loath to get up before seven; and then till dinner we pursue our several avocations, which have not been interrupted by any amusing variety, except one day having the house on fire and another when we sallied out on a fruitless chase after four wolves, from whom we succeeded, however, in rescuing the carcass of a deer which they had just run down, and which we conveyed home in triumph, and have feasted on venison ever since. This is the second deer which our hounds have run down for us this winter.

My journal therefore must be prospective. To-morrow I go home to make preparations for the rest who are to dine with me on my birthday, and to superintend an interesting event which is about to take place with my venerable nanny goat, who will now, I hope, supply me with milk. As soon as the lakes break up I go to York, or, as it is now named in the Act for incorporating it, Toronto, from whence I am to convey to Whitby an extremely miscellaneous assortment of articles for our end of the lake, each bearing his share of my ex penses; thence returning by Peterborough I am to meet the rest and help to bring up our new scow. The lake has not yet broken up, though the ice is very precarious in the middle of the day, but it cannot last more than a week. Nothing can exceed the beauty of the weather for this last month, once or twice for a day there has been heavy rain, but the rest has been the most delightful weather I ever experienced with no mosquitoes to annoy one; it is almost worth coming to Canada to experience such a month. Since I have been here the door has been open from sunrise to sunset though the lake lies in one unbroken sheet of ice within a few feet of us. The ducks are already crowding the rapids, the geese are daily going further north and in a few days we shall be in the midst of a northern spring; with it unfortunately will come heavy rains and mosquitoes, but we must be content—it is not to be expected that we should have such days as this of which you have no idea in England without some of the drawbacks from which you are exempt. To-morrow I believe this letter is to set off to meet Wallis. I must now stop and go to chop by the orders of my methodical host—if I find anything more to say I will [use] the remaining space to-night.

April 7th. Nothing new has occurred. The ice being very ticklish McAndrew and I went on a reconnoitering expedition, I first, to try the strength, and he behind me, to throw himself on his face to assist me if I went through. This did not occur, but, as it was so rotten as to allow us to sink over shoe tops as if in snow, we decided upon not going to my house and I kept my birthday here. To-day the ice has made very decided demonstrations of breaking up, having become detached at the edges, and the day after to-morrow I expect to go home in my canoe, which in contemplation of such an occurrence I dragged over the ice.

I wish my mother would send me one or two plain recipts for preserving. We have plenty of wild raspberries, plums and cranberries, and I have found a few gooseberry bushes. Living as we do almost exclusively on salt pork some acids are much wanted. I have had a great longing for them all winter but my health has not suffered; some people break out in boils. I have made no sugar this spring, partly from having too many things to attend to and partly because I have been informed that, unless you have several women and children to attend to the trees, it did not pay. I have now changed my opinion and next spring I will make a good quantity. It is very good but has a slight bitterness—not at all disagreeable—and the molasses is much better than that from the cane—not unlike rather insipid honey.

To his Father.

Cobourg, April 25, 1834.

I arrived here from the city of Toronto at four o'clock this morning and as I cannot find conveyance to Peterborough till to-morrow I am going to employ my vacant time and vent my spleen in letter writing. But before I indulge in a tirade against the whole monetary system of this Province I must bring up my journal to the present time.

On the 8th of April then (I think I got you up to the 7th) the ice commenced loosening so much at the edges that we, like boys just escaping for the holidays, went upon it with long poles and amused ourselves for some hours in breaking it up and driving the broken pieces under the main body so as to form a narrow channel

along shore into which we could launch my canoe for the sole purpose of giving Macradie an upset. This may seem ridiculous enough to you, but if you had the lake closed with ice for five months you would have enjoyed once more the sight of a little open water.

The 9th. Having heard that the lake was open at the mouth of the Scugog I went through the bush to where McAndrew's boat had been left and explored the limit of the ice but found it unbroken in that direction. On my return at three in the afternoon I saw at about five miles off down the Lake a floating tree which indicated open water there, and, as a smart wind blew from that quarter, it rapidly advanced, and before we went to bed we had the pleasure of hearing the waves breaking upon the shores. The next morning there was not a piece of broken ice the size of your hand to be seen but it still remained firm from Sturgeon Point to the westward so as to stop my return by water. I embarked, however, in my canoe with three of McAndrew's men and landing on the opposite shore reached my house by land. At sunset that evening there was not a particle of ice from Cameron's Falls to Bobcajewonunk, and such is the rapidity with which spring comes, that the same day which witnessed the last of the ice produced the first flower, the first mosquito and the first black fly I had seen. I have been the more particular about the events of these few days because the ice is a subject of as much importance to us as the River Mersey is to Liverpool.

[The men from McAndrew's were borrowed to clear up round his house as a preparation of safety for the burn, which was part of the choppers' contract and might be carried out by them during his absence in Toronto. This and other operations, such as getting

down their oxen which had arrived at Purdy's consumed the time until the 18th when, as agent for the four neighbours, he started for Toronto which by way of canoe to Peterborough steamboat to Rice Lake stage to Cobourg and steamboat again on Lake Ontario he reached on the 22nd.]

And now begin my griefs To meet the purchases I was to make I was the bearer of two drafts from McCall and Macredie, the former on York accompanied by a letter of credit, the other ought to have been cashed for me in Peterborough but this I soon saw was impossible. Cash at all times is a most rare article in Canada and now that the disordered state of the United States banks has thrown us all into confusion things have come to such a pass that people of known property refuse payment to their own bills with as much coolness as a dandy puts off his dunning tailor And to make matters worse Mr Bethune the great man of our district, has just been declared a bankrupt his failure is very severely felt many of the ruined emigrants have placed their funds with him and he has been a sort of savings bank for the poorer class For some time he has been refusing payment, but the storekeepers believing him sound have been taking orders on him in cash and they are consequently taken in too. How he may wind up I cannot form an idea One class hold him up as everything that is honourable noble and generous and they say his debts do not amount to £20,000 and that he can show undoubted security for £60,000 The other class doubt this much and don't scruple in private to call him a rascal Many believe that it was he himself who robbed the Bank of U C of the £3,000 which were missing last autumn when he was the cashier of its branch here. I know but little

of him personally, but he is an agreeable and gentlemanly person, and, though his own interest was doubtless at the bottom of it, has done more for the Newcastle district than any other living man. Be all this however as it may I do not believe that Sir Richard Arkwright himself could have raised £20 in Peterborough and Cobourg.

Still trusting to McCall's draft and some cash of my own I went on to Toronto, and after being put off for an hour or two on the plea of the cashier being absent, I was at length bowed out of the bank with the assurance that the names were perfectly good, but, etc., etc. In short the bank will not discount a halfpenny, and I got no money, so after spending the morning in making purchases of such things as appeared more immediately necessary, as far as I could spare the cash, I the next day embarked for this place, and mean to hasten back to the woods there to vegetate as well as I may until better times. To add to my melancholy this morning I have heard that during my absence Mr. Ferguson, the most respectable storekeeper and the kindest hearted and best man in Peterborough, died suddenly after a few hours' illness; his loss will be greatly felt, by none more than by us backwoodsmen to whom his house was always a home when they came down to Peterborough.

Unless some radical change is made in the money matters of this country it will not be a country to live in. Property there is in abundance but no representative of it, and the former increases in much more rapid proportion than the latter, so that we are getting worse every day. A metallic currency I am afraid cannot be established amongst us yet as the balance of trade is so decidedly against us with the States, but a much more extended paper currency must be issued or there

will soon be a stop to all business. The bank issues are not half sufficient for the wants of the country and they are under great restrictions in this respect from Government, but above all they are a monopoly. When they are refusing discount to every one else, the directors and their friends find favour in their sight; they are a monopoly not by statute but by the circumstances of the country. There are few men in Canada with capital sufficient to establish a private banking house of any extent and these few have their capital so locked up in mills, steamboats, land speculations, etc., that they cannot attempt it. And as for joint stock banks that was tried and failed last session. It passed the lower house indeed but a majority of the Legislative Council are either bank directors or shareholders and they threw it out. A private bank—or more—must be established with English capital and I think the country holds out the fairest prospects to them. Property, as I said before, there is in abundance—much more property and more generally diffused than in England in proportion. There is scarcely a man in Canada who has not tangible property of some kind and our Register offices prevent any fraud in this respect, as no deed or mortgage is valid that is not registered. During several years that Mr. Bethune was cashier of the Cobourg branch, though the discounts were then much more freely given than of late years, delay indeed frequently occurred from the want of a circulating medium, but during the whole of that time the actual loss upon discounted bills was only £200 or £300. When the risk is so small six per cent. offers, I think, a temptation. Then, if a low rate of interest were allowed on deposits, all that specie which yearly comes out from England with the emigrants to be locked up in their chests would be deposited with any substantial bank and all the remittances to and drafts on England would pass through their hands. The exorbitant profits on exchange which the bank exacts have thrown all that business where practicable into the hands of the Montreal merchants. When exchange was at five per cent. at Montreal not more than one and one-half or two could be obtained at Cobourg and in one case I know that only par was obtained. The bank have found their monopoly pretty profitable, twenty six per cent. having been divided last year. I do not wonder at the Legislative Council throwing out the Bill for establishing a joint stock bank at Cobourg.

In a former letter I remember saying I was growing a Tory—I feel myself fast approaching to Radicalism again, but not of that sort of which that little factious wretch Mackenzie is leader. I don't know whether you ever heard of him; he has been lately over in England with a budget full of grievances and we here think he has been making a great noise with you; when I first came out the first question everybody asked me was—"What do they think of Mackenzie in England?" and I was stared at when I said I had never heard of him. He is a little red haired man about five feet nothing and extremely like a baboon but he is the O'Connell of Canada. They have expelled him from the House of Assembly and elected him Mayor of the City of Toronto. But to return to banking—it has been some time reported that some of the London nobs are going to send out a house and that the buildings are already purchased in Toronto—I was just going to say the ground was purchased, but then you might have imagined it proposed to send the house out ready built from London—a speculation so singular that it might have made you look with suspicion on the whole report. This may do something for us—God knows we need it.

In one of your letters, if not your last, you express some apprehension about my canoe. Now a canoe* is certainly a little light affair that you can carry for a mile or two upon your shoulders and which a single false step in embarking or disembarking will upset, but it will carry half a dozen men in safety over a stormy lake and when you get accustomed to the craft you feel as steady as in a seventy four. Indeed the other day, so much does habit make one unconsciously keep one's balance, that though I attempted it frequently I could not upset my canoe when Macredie was out with me in it, and it was not till I had got out that his awkwardness in attempting to do the same enabled me to give him the desired ducking. Indeed there is only one case, except by gross carelessness, in which there is any danger in a canoe, viz. if you bring her broadside to the sea in rough weather, when she is very apt to swamp. A boat is in most cases a preferable craft, you can carry a greater load, you need not handle it like a new born baby, you go quicker and defy all winds. In a canoe unless the wind is dead aft it is always in your way, particularly if alone, and even with the greatest care she is constantly getting a leak. But then in fine weather she is so easily launched, and paddled with such ease and silence if you want to steal upon a duck, etc. You cannot take a boat upon your shoulders and carry it over any obstacle such as Cameron's Falls or the pitch at Bobcajewanunk, and in coming up even a practicable rapid in a boat you may indeed put out your whole strength, but you have to keep the middle of the stream with barely room often to ply your oars, whereas in a canoe you may go anywhere which will admit the narrow bark itself and steal up the sides of the stream taking advantage of the eddy caused by every stone and stump, and by stepping out with one foot keep her floating in two inches of water. Each has its own advantage and I have both to use as occasion may require.

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* A bark canoe.

I shall be very glad to give you a paper for the Lit. and Phil. Soc. if anything occurs worth noticing; perhaps you can suggest some point upon which my limited experience will enable me to hold forth to them, and I will direct my attention to it. If you belonged to the Manchester set I could give you Aurora Borealis enough to surfeit even old Dr. Dalton.

My space is growing so limited that I must be laconic, but the honey must not be forgotten. I might indeed collect a keg of the molasses of the maple sugar, and having flavoured it with wild herbs I might make honey such as my father loveth, but I am afraid you would detect the cheat; real honey I cannot promise. The honey bee is not a native of N. America and, though numerous swarms have established themselves in the woods and have become naturalized on the confines of civilization in the Western States, I hear of none in Canada. I even shall find difficulty in procuring the hives which I mean to locate on Sturgeon Lake, if their produce turns out to be deserving of the carriage you may depend upon the first fruits....

To his Father

Fenelon, May 24, 1834

[The previous letter was written from Cobourg on his way home from Toronto. This gives an account of

the journey from Peterborough, the little adventures of which are so characteristic of such journeys that it is a pity to omit them.]

Early on the 29th, I set off, accompanied by Edward Caddy, a very nice lad who is living with a brother settled in Douro, and we had a prosperous voyage till we got to Pigeon Lake, where of course there was a high wind and of course against us. About the middle of the lake Caddy, who had never been in a canoe before, got the cramp from his kneeling position and I had hard work for half an hour to keep us from retrograding whilst he was recovering. In consequence of this and a subsequent rest when we got under shelter of the other shore, Mr. Frazer, who was in company with us in a boat, got an hour's start of us; but about a mile below Bobcajewonunk we came up with them; they had been beaten back ten different times from one point in the river by the current. We in the canoe got up easily, and, meeting one of the choppers at the tavern, I sent him down to their assistance, but Mrs. Frazer had to be left in the bush until her husband returned to fetch her up by land. Sturgeon Lake is hardly a place for ladies yet.

As there was not enough daylight left to get our canoe up the rapids, we were obliged to spend a long evening at the tavern, which was unusually full in consequence of a house raising in the neighbourhood; the dimensions of the building (the tavern) are twelve feet by twenty two, in which space twenty three human souls, including three married couples and two unmarried females found sleeping room. Mr. and Mrs. Frazer, I must observe, walked on to Sawers'.

[Some cold weather in May, a little later, is also worth recording as a part of a visit to Peterborough.]

The 9th we [three guests with McAndrew McCall and himself] left McAndrew's in two boats and, calling at Mr Fraser's on the way we reached Bobcajewonunk before nine and sent back my boat with a family whom McAndrew had engaged to chop for me in Peterborough.

The steamer was just starting on her first trip of the season and we raced with her down Pigeon Lake, keeping ahead of her all the way to Billy McQue's where we stopped a while As we were six in the boat and could only pull two oars you may imagine what her speed is We got to Peterborough to dinner From then to the thirteenth we remained in Peterborough making purchases, which until then we could not get carried out to Chemong Lake On the fourteenth we were ready to start when lo! there were icicles three feet long hanging from the houses snow four inches deep and sleighs going about as if in winter. There never was such weather on record lucky it is for those who have no crops growing I don't know what the thermometer was but I think it must have been below twenty I am afraid I must give up praising our climate. The rapid change from twenty on the fourteenth, to eighty-eight on the twenty third will frighten the people of your more temperate regions. The thermometer was at eighty eight in the shade yesterday before twelve o'clock, what it might rise to afterwards I don't know However being rather lightly clothed we did not care to face the snowstorm and did not leave Peterborough till the fifteenth the ground being hard frozen.

Upon arriving to breakfast on Chemong Lake we found our scow had not yet been brought there according to promise, and as McCall was useless from a bad hand. McAndrew and I did not like to undertake bringing her down from five miles off by ourselves and then continuing our journey with almost a certainty of having to camp out on the road without blankets, so as the steamer was just starting we got all our things on board and got to Bobcaygewonunk before five. Leaving most of our luggage there we got up the rapids with as much as our boat would hold, with the intention of getting forward to McAndrew's to sleep, but in passing Need's about five o'clock, the sight of a deer which the wolves had just driven into the lake and he had killed, together with his pressing invitation, arrested us.* We had had nothing to eat since breakfast and were wet and cold; the idea of arriving at McAndrew's at eleven at night and having to light a fire and cook our supper was not cheering. However as it was we had better have gone on, for Need's fire would not burn, and what with skinning and cutting up the deer it was one o'clock in the morning before we got supper; and to crown our misfortunes Need does not keep any spare blankets, so McAndrew and I had to sleep on the floor in our wet clothes, after many fruitless attempts to get the fire to burn.

We were off before anybody was stirring and got to McAndrew's for breakfast, and in the afternoon I went home in my boat with a most unruly cargo, consisting of a pig and six fowls together with some more manage-

able bags of flour, oats etc In the middle of the Lake the pig got her legs loose and dire was the scuffle before I could get her down again and get her manacles adjusted. In her struggles she had kicked out some rags with which a leak had been temporarily stopped up till I can get a supply of oakum and pitch and I had to stop every ten minutes to bale out, until by shifting my cargo to one side so as to bring one gunwale almost to the water I contrived to keep the leak above water not however without imminent danger of drowning my pig in the water which still filled the bottom of the boat. The pig though a bad sailor is nevertheless a good pig, a very tractable animal except for a great fondness for coming into the house. As for want of oxen I have not yet been able to fence in my garden, I cannot fairly object against her the rooting up my onion bed. The hens might as well have remained at Peterborough for the brush heaps afford so many convenient hiding places that I have not yet found an egg, indeed one of the poor creatures would have been much better there, for she this morning served as breakfast to a fox or marten. I have finished the frame of a hen house but until I get up some of my boards* from McAndrew's I cannot give them effectual shelter

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* The killing of this deer, together with "a sudden and extreme change of temperature" while snow was on the ground, is mentioned by Need under the date of May 17. Need's book is spoilt by an excessive reserve about other people, and he makes no mention of his guests on this occasion or of the adventure of preparing the deer for food, but his narrative is evidently an account of the same day as that here noted as the 16th. Both diarists occasionally lost a day. Need crossed the lake on Monday to attend the Church Service a friend held on Sunday. John Langton, p. 164, discovers he has dated his letter wrong.

The 17th I began digging up a garden a most laborious operation for there is such a tangled mass of roots to be cleared away that the axe and the pickaxe with the assistance of the hands almost supersede the use of the spade. What I have done behind the house is, however thoroughly cleared and is reserved for those plants which require a well cultivated soil the front of the house I have left for Macredie (who came up this day to stay a few days with me) and it will produce some things until I have time to get the whole thoroughly cleared.

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* During his absence in Toronto the three Macs had brought down from Purdy's saw mills two rafts of boards each containing 10,000 ft which were to be divided among the four neighbours.

The 18th, Sunday: we spent much of the day on the lake as being the coolest place.

The 19th. My choppers had not yet returned and as we had had a few days of dry weather I was afraid to lose the opportunity and resolved to burn their chopping without them. If the burn turned out a bad one, of course they would have come upon me for the damage, but the fear of being quite too late for potatoes overcame my doubts and, getting the assistance of my new choppers, we soon had it in a blaze; about half an hour afterwards my men arrived. As it turned out we should have done much better to have waited a few days, but as the men acknowledged that they were hurrying up to burn that day I am relieved of all responsibility. It has been a very poor burn in many parts and in my own chopping it has not burnt at all so that I don't think I shall get more than seven or eight acres ready for a crop out of the fifteen or more that are down, the rest will have to wait for the autumn but I shall get in my potatoes and turnips and probably some oats for the straw. Indeed upon new land the oats seldom bring much grain to perfection but the straw is most luxuriant and is almost indispensable for fodder in the winter.

The next three days Macredie and I worked at the garden, and yesterday having at last got hold of Jameson's scow, I went over to McAndrew's and brought up my oxen which I have never before been able to get across the lake since we brought them down. To-day we drew off the logs which encumbered the ground of my garden and drew in logs to split up for rails, so that as soon as I get a man to help me I shall have a chance of getting it fenced in and into some decent order. The three Macs are gone down to-day in the scow to bring up our flour, etc. from the rapids. On Monday we go to Ops to bring down potatoes, and there I mean to hire a man; and on Wednesday we all go to Peterborough to buy McCall's and Macredie's land, to bring up our scow, and to get some pork, for we are beginning to be threatened with scarcity. Next week I shall have twelve mouths to feed and I have not above 150 pounds of pork left. McAndrew has been for some time borrowing a few pounds at a time. Jameson, who used to be our principal reliance in case of want, has twenty or thirty hands employed building his saw mill, and at the lower end of the lake there is an absolute famine. Need, after borrowing as much as anybody would lend, had eaten his last piece of pork to dinner the day he killed the deer. I am loath to leave home just now, especially as my oxen are but in poor condition and I am afraid of the men overworking them at the logging, but as I have escaped going down to Bobcajewonunk to-day I am afraid I must bear my share of bringing up the new scow.

You ask as to my plans of proceeding. I think that my former letters will have given you hints at different times from which you can gather my intentions pretty accurately, but I will now tell you more connectedly what my mode of operations will be.

I have now chopped (at a guess for it is not yet measured) about eleven acres by my first contract, about five of my own, and Abraham Fitchett, the new chopper I mentioned, is to have fifteen more ready for fall crop. Then there will be about fifteen acres more along the lake shore which I shall get done during this summer and winter, partly by contract, partly by my own man, to open my present clearing to the lake—about ten or twelve acres of this will be light chopping, principally young timber on an old windfall or burn and will have to lie a summer before burning. This will make an opening from forty to fifty acres and most of this will be down in wheat and rye this fall and will be sown with grass in the spring. After this I propose to contract for ten acres every year and my own man may get perhaps about three more down; part of this will of course be got ready by the spring and the whole down in wheat in the fall. Fitchett, who has a large family, wants to buy some land of me and has proposed to clear sixty acres for 300, which at fourteen dollars an acre is equal to 14/ for the land.* The offer is not a bad one and if, upon further acquaintance, I am satisfied with the man's character I think we may make a bargain, but I will not have more than ten or at the most fifteen acres chopped annually until hands are more easily to be got. I would sell him for instance 200 acres for ten acres cleared annually for five years which reckoning interest on the instalments would be a trifle less than he offers. But this is a parenthesis. The first crop of wheat ought nearly to pay the expense of clearing the land, and, if you [get] a crop off in the summer before wheat is sowed, it should quite cover the expense. You then have the land in grass for four years before you attempt to plough, for if you try a second crop unless it be potatoes or corn (Indian), which being planted in hills you can hoe between, it is choked up with weeds from the impossibility of ploughing new land, and moreover all the stumps will send up suckers and you will have to cut and burn them again. When in grass the cattle will keep the suckers down of every tree except basswood. At the end of four years or on a summer's chopping or fallow in three you may get in the plough and each year some of the stumps come out. The first ploughing after so short a time is a laborious and expensive business, but the stumps will rot out the faster. After the plough has been got in you may follow of course any plan of cropping which may appear desirable but grass is the only thing to succeed your first crop on the greatest part of your land.

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* In the old currency a shilling was the equivalent of 20 cents.

Now it appears, upon the plan I have sketched, that in the last year before I should get the plough into the land I am to have in wheat this fall, I should have eighty or ninety acres in grass and only fifteen in any other kind of crop, or, allowing five acres of the last year's chopping to be in spring corn, twenty acres, and this seems disproportionate; but it appears to be the opinion of every one I have spoken to that the rearing and feeding of cattle is the most profitable mode of farming in this country, and that, even after the plough can be got in, a grazing farm would be preferable to an arable one; and if the fully stocking so large a portion of grass land should appear to require too large an outlay of capital, I will observe that there will be many new settlers who, having no grass of their own, will be glad to put out their cattle; and that, besides a large quantity of hay being required for one's own cattle during our long winter, hay is an article which bears a higher proportionate price than any other produce, except in new townships potatoes, which were last year selling in Ops at as high a price per bushel as much of their wheat fetches this year.

You are very hard upon us and our slovenly ways of building, etc. but it seems to me you do not make sufficient allowances for the difference between a new and an old country or for the hurry in which things are obliged to be done in a first settlement. Labour is dear and the hands you employ, from being obliged to do a little of everything, are not very perfect at anything, so that you cannot afford the expense of, and cannot get the men to perform first rate work at any rate. The cornering and hewing of a well built log house is [? not] perhaps as nice work as your Russian mode of fitting the logs,* but the one your men have been accustomed to and the other they have never seen. If you set them to any strange kind of work you must make up your mind to pay doubly and have worse work into the bargain; besides a man who has been sleeping in the open air with all his luggage under no better shelter than a cedar tree is glad to get under any sort of roof which will keep out the rain, and having spent a fortnight in a doorless, chimneyless, unchinked shanty he is equally in a hurry to get into something more worthy of the name of a house. Then as to the time which the building of my house took, a person who is living in England or Russia, who has his regular carpenters and masons, together with horses and carts to bring his materials all at hand, is very apt to overlook the difference of our situation—the ground has to be cleared, the logs have to be cut here and there, to be carried on men's shoulders and raised to their places by mere human force, trees have to be split and hollowed out into troughs to form the roof; boards have to be fetched from a saw mill sixteen miles off and then carried a quarter of a mile on your shoulders; the cellar has to be dug; the stones for the chimney must be collected, and carried by hand sometimes a considerable distance, and, if you are unfortunately late in the season, the clay which is to cement and plaster your walls must be mixed with boiling water and worked before a fire, and you must keep a fire in the chimney whilst building to keep your cement from freezing. Then—your men may be lamed with a cut, etc., etc., which would be tedious to detail, but which taken collectively form no small impediment to one's progress, more especially the wounds which in frost will hardly ever heal, so that the scratches which in an ordinary way one would never think of, by accumulating sometimes make one's hands almost useless; we were once obliged to give up bread, none of us having a hand fit to knead with.

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* The frequent allusions to Russia are due to his father's impressionable youth having been spent there. No doubt the building of log houses in Russia, and the hewing of them, operations centuries old, impressed him by their perfection, a perfection from which the backwoods methods were far removed.

Upon this subject of bread you are severe upon us too and have insulted us by offering a present of Robinson Crusoe. His oven no doubt was a very good one, but we in Canada have one quite as good.

But Rome was not built in a day; at first we had so much on our hands that we had no time to think of raising bread, besides that the frost operates much against the making of leaven; at last, however, we got some barm with the assistance of hops, etc., and though in a hurry I still occasionally resort to the dough cakes, I am now getting as good bread as any in Liverpool. Our oven, or—as it is called—a bakepan, is a round pan with a flat bottom and flat lid, under which a few cinders are put and some more on the top, and it bakes as well as Robinson Crusoe could desire. The dough cakes are not as you seem to think a sort of fried dough, though that was what we had recourse to when we could not knead, but round thick cakes of good dough put into the bottom of a frying pan which is reared up before the fire with some hot coals behind it, and thus it is half toasted, half baked—very palatable I can assure you, particularly if mixed with a little pork fat.

Then you recommend to rub the pease through a sieve—but where is the sieve? And my mother suggests the potatoes being boiled separately—but I have only one pot. When I give a feast I am hard put to it for want of culinary utensils but, with a little contrivance, I have managed on two occasions to produce six dishes. Thus, the pot may first half boil potatoes to be afterwards sliced and fried after the pork, it may then half boil a piece of beef which may be finished in a rude sort of Dutch oven, whilst the pot once more does duty with a stew of porcupine and rice; in the meantime the bakepan having finished a loaf may bake a venison pie and a cranberry tart, and without much difficulty fried fish and a devilled duck or partridge may be added, all which with the addition of cheese will make a very handsome dinner for the backwoods.

By the bye of cooking and eating which *unaccountably* fill a large space of my letters, for I am sure in practice they are very little attended to, excepting on the occasion of the before mentioned feasts when any strangers come up, and occasionally one amongst ourselves on birthdays, etc., or when we have got something particular, just to keep us in practice. Sometimes for form's [sake] I lay the cloth and take my meals regularly, but generally when Macredie is not

with me I take no regular meals, perhaps there may be some cold pork, or I fry some cold potatoes, but I never have any cooking till after dark; the loaf of bread and a tea pot full of cold tea hang always ready if I feel hungry during the day, which however seldom happens. The baking, which I always disliked and which is a great interruption, I have lately transferred to Mrs. Grey, and the other bore, the washing up, unless Macredie comes, who shines in that line, I do all in a lump when I have used up my stock of plates, etc. In truth I am almost tired of living alone. But as I was saying by the bye of eating, we are beginning to improve in that respect; venison is not yet in season and maskinonge has just gone out for a month or two, but the pigeons are beginning to be numerous, partridges may be had at half an hour's warning, though it is rather a shame to shoot them at present, and a stray duck falls in one's way every now and then. The other day I shot a porcupine which upon the second trial I pronounce very good eating, and, what is better, there is a great deal of solid substantial food on them; there is a peculiar smell and taste about the meat which I judged it prudent to mitigate by parboiling, but after that he made a most excellent stew. The beast to my surprise was in the top of a tree, and, if you wish more acquaintance with him his name is Hystrix dorsata. Then I have a kid ready for the butcher in another week, and about a fortnight after expect a goodly family of little pigs, which, with what I may shoot and with the eggs, chickens and ducks I may have and my goat's milk after the death of her kid, will supply me with an occasional variety from salt pork. But our great dependence at present is the black bass. Remembering your enquiries about the creature I went out yesterday (to-day is Sunday the 25th) and caught one. First having examined it I pronounce it to belong to the family of Percoides, of the order Acanthopterygii, to have the ventral fins below the pectoral, to have only one dorsal fin, six bronchial rays and numerous crowded teeth. I believe it to be of the genus Pomotis of Cuvier, the species my authority does not enable me to determine; and secondly, having eaten it I decide that it is an excellent fish. Water zoutje we have not yet tried, but from the gelatinous nature of the gravy which fills a dish upon which cold fish has been left I think it may succeed. Whatever the scientific name of the fish may be, its American name is Black Bass, the same if I remember right which is immortalized by Cooper in the Pioneers. When maskinonge comes into season I will tell you all I can discover with regard to them.

I do not propose giving Billy McQue a spade. I do not see what use he has for it except to take out the ashes.

I want nothing particular from England.

May the 28th. As I have still some room left I will fill it with my journal up to the present time, and it is fortunate for me that I have not to occupy the space by contradicting my last sentence saying that instead of nothing I want everything.

[This is said because, while visiting McAndrew, he received news that they were burning the brush at his place.] As this [he says] had already been finished ten days ago I was rather uneasy, but thinking my house pretty safe I went on loading the scow till the arrival of Fitchett with intelligence that the fire, which has been smouldering in old logs ever since my burn,

had broken out with the high wind and that the cedar swamp in front of my house was all in a blaze. Having removed everything from Grey and Reilly's shanty which was in the greatest danger, he had left two of his boys with orders to watch the progress of the fire and break open my house if the danger increased. I jumped into the first boat that came in my way and pulled off directly. Grey followed with Fitchett and his son, and soon after Macredie and McInnes put off after me. Having fallen [on] a most miserable abortion of a boat and the wind being very high I landed as soon as possible and struck off through the bush, being much assisted by my new road which I fell in with. Grey and I, having the one a wife and child and the other his property at stake, far outstripped the rest and had got most of the contents of my house out before assistance arrived. When we reached the bottom of the hill, from the top of which I knew we should ascertain our fate, we moderated our pace. I must say I felt very philosophical, receiving great consolation from the recollection that I had lent Jameson the day before eleven plates, but upon reaching the top of the hill my house gladdened my sight—entire—though Grey's was a heap of ashes. He is now however domesticated in my vacant shanty and does not appear to have lost anything but one knife and fork.

When I was living here alone I had always planned that if a fire took place I would throw everything down into the cellar, but my cellar is now unfortunately really a cellar and not a well, so we removed all the heavy articles outside and, having carried up a lot of empty barrels to the middle of the clearing, we carried up sacks full of the loose articles and filled them there

We have now I think, by keeping the ground well wet, set certain bounds to the fire which it will not transgress while the wind remains in the present quarter at least; but fallen trees having since choked up my road to the lake we shall be ill off for water in case it increased. However towards sunset the wind generally dies away and we have a fair promise of a rainy night, so that I have carried everything back into the house but kept them packed up in readiness to remove at a moment's notice and having taken a couple of hours sleep I am now ready to sit up all night to watch. If the wind changes before rain comes the house must go, but I shall have time to save the contents.

Of course I shall not go down to-morrow to Peterborough but must get my business done by some of the rest. Macredie I am momentarily expecting to come back for my instructions and this letter.

This is but a tantalizing conclusion to a letter, and I am almost sorry now that I did not reserve to-day's occurrences for a beginning to my next; but it is one of the evils of the backwoods which, when one has been living for a week surrounded by fires, one thinks much less of [fire] than you will. However you may console yourself with this—that should the house be burnt I am not at all alarmed for the contents, and though I should not like to lose the £20 it may have cost, I can now build a much better for the money. I will write again in a fortnight to tell you the result and perhaps this letter may not get off till that can be known—for when I left McAndrew's there were fires burning so near it that I should not leave it to-morrow if it were mine, and I should think he will not. But what with the party there now and his men he has so many hands that there cannot be much danger.

P. S. Peterborough, May 31st. All danger being over and three more men having arrived to help at my logging I came down here yesterday.

To his Father

Fenelon, 13th June, 1834

You seem to wonder that we do not buy our goods at Peterborough. Mr Ferguson was an excellent worthy man, but a very bad storekeeper; he went upon the old Canadian system of enormous profit and almost unlimited credit; this might be almost necessary formerly, but now when cash is more plentiful those who have it are not content to give cash for credit prices. The merchants at York and in the front soon found out this and reduced their prices for cash accordingly, but the new system had not travelled into the backwoods when we made our purchases last year; they talked indeed of cash, but it was the old Canadian cash, viz., six months and—a bittock. There is a great deal of difference between cash and down upon the counter. Mr Wark had just arrived last year and was perfectly well inclined to take the credit prices, though he was understood to be equally for payment of them in cash. But Mr Wark though very shrewd is a man of business and saw through the evils of the system; when we had found out the way by the Scugog river he came forward with a proposal to deal with us at really cash prices, but always under an injunction of secrecy, being unwilling to lose the benefit of the—almost—monopoly, which since Mr Ferguson's death he holds of those to whom the Scugog is not so convenient. We agreed to his proposals, and I hope may now get our supplies from thence at moderate rates, which will be

the more convenient to us, as he is establishing a store at Bobcaygeon, so that he can deliver us our goods there. (You see I have altered my spelling once more in obedience to common usage, though the other accords better with the Indian pronunciation; in common parlance we call the two channels for shortness Great and Little Bob.) I do not place implicit reliance on Mr. Wark alone, but we are going to have another large establishment at the head of which will be Mr. Ferguson's brother. They have purchased the Peterborough mills for £8,000 from Mr. Hall, who four years ago paid £3,000 for them—about three times as much as he was worth in the world, and they are going to open in connection with them an extensive store. Between the two I consider Peterborough our market now, though it is a comfort to have a nearer road to Lake Ontario, and I think we shall not often have to resort to the front or to England to get things cheaper (excepting for very heavy articles), though we may get them better. I hope that the state of the money market last winter will have opened the eyes of Canada in general to the impolicy of the old credit system.

You will say that in my disquisition on the trade of Peterborough I talk more as if I was a merchant than a poor farmer. But I am a sort of merchant in my way, and the stores I have to get up amount to a sum which makes the difference between cash and credit prices of great importance. I have now thirteen persons to supply with all the necessaries of life, viz., two sets of men working on contract and two men on wages; and though I make a profit which remunerates me for my trouble and risk in bringing the goods up, I contrive generally to sell them cheaper than they could get them from a store in Peterborough.

The events of a stay at Peterborough always puzzle me in writing my journal. On Sundays we go to church and make calls and on week days drinking tea at Col. Brown's or the Fergusons is the only variety from wandering about from the blacksmith to the cooper, the shoemaker, the tin man, the mill and the different stores, fruitlessly endeavouring to hurry them on with what you want . . . . .

Your suggestion upon the subject of potatoes shall be tried; it reminds me of a receipt I got from Mr McDonell: maskinonge is in full season in the winter and is then speared through the ice. When you get more than you want, of course in winter they will keep till there is a thaw, but then they go directly. Now I am instructed to treat them thus: When you have a maskinonge to spare, boil a couple of dozen potatoes, peel them and mash them in the bottom of a barrel, strewing on plenty of salt and pepper; then boil your fish—practice only can tell you how much—but at a certain stage if you take him up by the tail and give him a gentle shake over the barrel all the flesh will fall off and leave the skeleton in your hand; lay this evenly and salt and pepper it again, repeat this operation till your barrel is full, then head it up and when all is hard frozen it will keep in a cool place good till the beginning of June. When any is wanted for use take out a sufficient quantity and fry it in little round cakes.

One thing I must complete this summer, which with you is a luxury but with us almost a necessity—an ice-house. Even my kid, small as it was, was almost too much for me though I had a dinner party and two chance guests, hungry customers who had been walking through the bush all day. Without an ice house we must absolutely live on fish, birds, or salt meat, for we

never could get through a good joint. Then with an ice-house one might keep ducks, pigeons, partridge, etc., which are plentiful in the fall, for winter's use when they are difficult to get, and one might have a better chance of keeping beer; even in winter there are occasional thaws for a day or two when one's stores would stand a bad chance.

Upon the subject of Billy McQue and his spade I must beg leave to have a discriminating power; he is a most hospitable old creature. I have known him, when he had not a mouthful in the house, buy some venison of an Indian to satisfy a hungry guest, which he would never have asked for himself; but he has no use for a spade, and a bag of flour, which I gave him last winter and mean to repeat this, is more than compensation for any damage his spade may have sustained.

By the bye I have had a bright idea. Shall I call my house Pecoosheen, which being interpreted means Black Fly—a name by which, why and wherefore I cannot tell, I commonly go amongst the Indians. Pecoosheen of that ilk would sound well I think.

June 18th. I do not like writing home when I am in a bad humour for fear my letters may partake of the infection, but though I am in anything but a philosophic mind to-day I am driven by sheer ennui to continue my letter. My house is so closely packed with flour, oats, pork, potatoes, etc., that any indoors work is next to impossible, and as there is only one dry spot where I can bestow myself locomotion becomes very inconvenient. A general washing day is proverbially detrimental to placidity of mind and how much more so must be the state in which I now am which has all the disadvantages of wet, extending even to my bed, without at all promoting the cleanliness of anything

At the setting in of the thaw I thought myself badly off when I had to move my chair now and then to escape the driblets of water which from time to time found their way through the roof, but that was a luxury to my present state when the boards which cover my house have shrunk up with our June sun and admit a copious flow of water fifty places at once. Yesterday I bore the rain with great philosophy, consoling myself with the good it was doing my potatoes, but to-day, when I have finished the old newspapers and reviews, settled my accounts and done all the odd jobs I can think of, I must own I am tired of being wet, day and night, and look forward with pleasure to such weather as we had last Sunday week when the thermometer stood at 92° in the shade. But my troubles in this respect will I hope be soon over, for I am going to have two men this week to shingle my house and add the other wing, and then, but not till then, I shall be able to get the interior properly and comfortably finished.

On Saturday the 21st, as I was going up to the Falls to fetch Capt. Dobbs down to dine with me and play chess, I met Jameson's scow coming down with two of his men and two strangers returning from the Falls, and, as I had promised Jameson to get him a load up from the Rapids, I returned with them. We dined at my house and drank tea at McAndrew's, waiting for the wind to fall. About 8 p.m. we continued our journey and camped out about eleven at the head of the Rapids; as I had been rowing near twenty miles that morning before I met the scow and had pulled all the way down I slept most soundly, but my companions, the gentlemen just arrived, complained of rain and other inconveniences of which I knew nothing.

22nd. We went down in my boat and brought up in several trips the greater part of our load, but she is so out of repair at present with carrying greater loads than she is calculated for, that she very nearly sunk with us twice and detained us a long time in patching her up. At night I preferred the bush to the dirt and noise of the tavern and camped out again with three Mohawk Indians on their return to the lower province with fifty beaver and other skins—£150 worth. I have often before spoken of the mosquitoes and my friends[*] the black flies, but there is another insect to which I am sure I have not done sufficient honour —the midge, sandfly or gnat,—a diminutive little creature scarce more than a black point. Its prick is like that of a needle and I had always despised it as beyond the first prick I never found any inconvenience from them, but when they come in tens of thousands it ceases to be a joke, and though I never yet have satisfactorily traced one of their bites to a spot, yet there are some five hundred to a thousand spots upon my hands, face, breast and other exposed parts to which I can ascribe no other origin. (I form this rough estimate from seventy-eight which I counted on one hand, and I am sure my breast has double that number; the people at the Rapids, which they principally affect, look as if in the measles.) These with a due admixture of mosquitoes and black flies, together with ants, upon a nest of which I happened to spend the night, rendered me abundantly uncomfortable, but having been up to my middle in water working hard all day I slept well notwithstanding. 23rd. As we had been detained so long I resolved to wait for the steamer in the evening in hopes of some new arrivals and as we had time to spare I set the men to take up the rest of the load and took a holyday myself, during which I made great progress in an acquaintance with my new friends the Mohawks. From them I learnt the art of making an extempore canoe of elm bark, in one of which, measuring 6¼ by 2½ feet and about 2 inches out of the water, I amused myself by paddling about and though loath at first to leave the smooth and shallow water I finally trusted myself with confidence in the roughest part of the Rapids. The Mohawk hunting country is not like ours intersected by great lakes and rivers, and they consequently encumber themselves rarely with canoes, but if they come upon a stream, in a few hours they can make a canoe of this sort capable of holding twenty men. As we advanced in intimacy during the day though our only medium of communication was imperfect French and a still more imperfect Mississauga interpreter, the old chief Uraguadire intimated his intention of making me a member of the Five Nations. He first commenced by an oration to his two companions, and then while he held my hand they all joined in a wild song and finally hailed me by the name of So-ja-he-wa-nen, the final n being a scarcely audible nasal. My new name being interpreted means "Un bien bon feu dans les bois"—truly a very good antidote for the Pecoosheens. They assure me that if ever I go to Cochnawaga or the Lake of the Two Mountains and mention my name I shall be recognized as a brother Indian.

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[*] Alluding to his Indian name.

The Mohawks are certainly a much finer specimen of the Indians than our Mississaugas if I may judge from this sample. They were all three fine muscular men and the youngest, a nephew of the old chief, remarkably handsome.*

Mr Smith, the surveyor of our new township was down hunting for the boundary line of Verulam and Harvey, a continuation of which is to be his boundary and (I mention it as showing how land was surveyed ten years ago) the 19th concession of Harvey is nowhere to be found What are the poor people to do who have bought land in the 19th concession? I question much if Government will refund the money or if they can get redress from the surveyor and his sureties.

I may as well mention another of our grievances. Last year Government contrary to the best advice raised the price of land at once from 5/ to 10/ and now they find that they were in error and are talking of reducing it again. What are we to do who bought at 10/? We certainly shall not get any of our money back and I doubt even if we get land in exchange But with all this land keeps up its price a lot was sold at 25/ the other day near me and not nearly as good land as mine. But it is only monied men who buy here all the labourers are going to the West. Whatever they may do I am not afraid of losing my land, though it may be annoying to see others buying at half price; my vicinity to Cameron's Falls will always insure me a good price.

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* Need, under date of June 18 of this year says "At the Rapids below the clearing I fell in with three Indians of the Mohawk tribe, returning from the chase with a quantity of furs One of them was Pierre, a celebrated model of Indian symmetry I do not think I ever witnessed so faultless a form and figure, whether for beauty or strength"

These Mohawks, spoken of in a later letter as "great rascals by the way" were intruders upon the hunting grounds of the local Indians who were afraid of them in spite of or perhaps because of the massacre spoken of on p 90 Need says the local Indians annoyed him by camping on his land too close to his house He did not like to drive them away but when they appeared a second time he says, "I contrived to drop a hint or two of an expected visit from some Mohawk Indians The intruders said nothing and appeared to receive the intelligence with perfect indifference, but on rising next morning I had the satisfaction of finding the camp broken up and the coast cleared"

. . . . To-day (26th), Capt. Dobbs and McAndrew came down to tea and the former beat me three games at chess. He is an old player and understands the rules, but I do not despair of beating him yet when I get a little more into practice.

The gentlemen being weather bound stayed all night, but as they chose to go to bed at the unchristianlike hour of nine o'clock I took the opportunity of writing my journal and finishing this letter, from nine to five being rather more than I like of a blanket on the floor. And now that I have finished my journal thus far, allow me to say that it is the last that I shall write with such regularity. I originally commenced upon this system thinking that first impressions are best conveyed in that form, and that from a journal of my proceedings you would be better able to judge of our way of life than if I had attempted a more formal description of the state of society, etc. But now novelty is wearing off and there is nothing in nine days out of ten worthy of being recorded. Whenever any variety occurs I will faithfully relate the adventure, but where I am silent you must imagine to yourself my usual humdrum life.

To his Father

Fenelon, Oct. 28, 1834.

It is so long since I wrote last, and that too after a considerable interval, that I fear you will think I am going to relax in my diligence as a correspondent, but when the hurry is once fairly over I have no doubt I shall become more regular again.

Ever since July I have been in a continued bustle, with twenty things calling imperatively to be done and no time to be spared. When called down to Peterborough it has been in a hurry before I had time to write a letter, and when down there it is impossible to write.

To-morrow we are going down to Peterborough for the last time before winter, for the treble purpose—of attending a public meeting to petition for the opening of the Trent,—to get up our stores before our approaching state of torpidity comes on,—and to be present at a housewarming to be given by Major Hamilton;—and this opportunity of writing to you, as it may be the last for some time, I must not let slip.

I do not remember by the bye whether I ever mentioned the Major to you in any of my letters. He is a very gentlemanly old man who bought a mill at Peterborough last autumn and has lately been joined by an agreeable family of all sexes and ages, of whom the eldest son, about twenty, is going to be our neighbour next summer on Cameron's Lake, on his father's grant.*

Of my proceedings since I last wrote I have not much to say; when I went down to Peterborough and returned to my house with Mr. James, we were the bearers of the news that the Governor† was at last coming up to our Lakes. Having notified this to the different gentleman on the road we went up to McAndrew's and he and I rowed down to Needle to bring the great man up, leaving McCall and Macredie to cook dinner. But no governor had arrived and we returned to console ourselves by eating his dinner. Next day James and I went on to Blythe* and I sent my men down for the seed wheat I had brought up. But the following day, when I was without my boat, we had the satisfaction of seeing His Excellency proceed up with a long train of boats, canoes etc. After a while McAndrew sent us a log canoe and we followed up to the Falls.

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* Major Hamilton was of the 78th and 79th Highlanders. He served with Sir Ralph Abercrombie in Egypt, and in other campaigns. On retirement from service he received from the Imperial Government, a grant of 3000 acres of land in Canada. He came to Peterborough in 1833 and purchased the grist mill and saw mill of Adam Scott on Scott's Plains by the Otonabee. To these he added a brewery and distillery and operated them with Mr. Fortye, a son-in-law. His family consisted of three sons and seven daughters.

† Sir John Colborne.

The Governor was quite delighted with the place and promised to send us up plenty of settlers next year. This is not all humbug, Sir John being a plain straightforward sort of person, and to shew his zeal he next day walked about a dozen miles through the bush to see the Talbot river, which runs into Lake Simcoe, and immediately ordered a survey of the country between it and Balsam Canal. From Sir John's character and his known exertions when he has taken a fancy to a particular township I anticipate the happiest results.

Yours of the 27th August contains much to answer—at least many queries though short ones. Pork may certainly be grown as good in Canada as in the States, and the farmers' pork is generally better, but not being yet so well a settled country we use more pork than we grow and Ohio pork can be procured cheaper; they have extensive backwoods there where the pigs run almost wild,—most of the heads in our pork contain a rifle ball. This winter I shall not use much pickled pork. I am going to kill my interesting animal and two of her progeny when the frost sets in.

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* The name he had given his house, "the true pronunciation of the other name—Pingueshine—being too like Pincushion."

My ice house is nearly finished, half below the surface, with a good drain, and half above; the walls being double, of logs with about a foot of earth between, the roof of cedar slabs thatched with hemlock boughs and covered with a rounded top of earth from one to three feet. This with a roothouse of similar construction, a hen house, two pigstyes, a shed for cattle, one for firewood, and two shanties, form a little village round my mansion with its two wings.

If you wish my letters still to give you a sort of Journal I can do it, as I still keep a journal for my own edification and when anything out of the way happens I certainly will give it in that form, but I think, in general, a hebdomadal will answer your purpose as well as a journal.

Peterborough, Oct. [Nov.] 8th. . . . We have had the Trent meeting of which I spoke and have got our petition well signed. It is to the effect that if our provincial funds cannot suffice, which is improbable, we wish our Parliament to apply to the Home government to open it, the increased value of Crown land and sale of mill sites will go a long way in repaying them. If they will not do it we petition them to sell at the present rate the Crown lands on the course of the waters to a Company to open the navigation. Since the meeting we have had letters from several parts of the country, promising to cooperate with us, if none of these plans succeed, in raising the necessary funds by imposing a local tax of so much an acre upon all lands in the Newcastle District. The thing is receiving so much general attention now that I think it must soon be done. About £300,000 will be required, and I should think that the mill sites which would be created at the locks would sell for near £100,000. This would bring it up as far

as Peterborough. About £150,000 more might be wanted to extend the navigation to Lake Simcoe. . . .

The following is a statement which will give you a pretty correct notion of my financial situation. Of this account I must observe that I had brought down with me most of the data, but I find them now insufficient to give a full account. My miscellaneous expenses of this year I cannot yet make up; the greater part of them come under the head of provisions. It is to be observed also that the greater part of the expense of clearing has been paid in provisions and consequently about £60 must be deducted, if my account for provisions in this year had been made up.

I must also add £44 odd, a present loss by which I have gained experience: Mr. Wark of this place has failed and taken me in to that amount, but I believe I shall recover about £30.

The greater part of my heavy expenses are now over, except the remaining instalments on my land, and I have now something coming in. Besides my crops, which will now much relieve my expenditure for provisions which has been very heavy, I have been paid £25 in a bill on Jameson for Gordon's land and he owes me £37 10s more to be paid in annual instalments of £12 10s, and my other land will soon be producing something.

Statement

U. E. Rights (one unlocated)	£112	4	0
Land, within £1 or 2	" 90	0	0
Clearings	" 79	6	0
Oxen £58 8 and cows and pigs £13	" 71	8	0
Labour (including buildings)	" 79	15	0

N. B. Some later payments omitted

Miscellaneous expenses for 1833

Travelling, living etc	£44.	7	3			
Carriage, including boats	21	1	11½			
Tools etc.	10	4.	9			
Furniture including several miscellanies	31	0.	8½			
Lumber for house, etc	5.	2.	0			
Provisions stores etc.	45.	3.	4			
Postages, etc., etc.	15.	3.	2	£172	3.	2
				£604.	16.	2

To his Father

Peterborough, Feb. 18th, 1835

You express a desire that I should continue to write to you somewhat of a journal and this in my future letters I will endeavour to do, in this one however I cannot commence the practice as I intend to begin from the beginning of the year, and I have now no time for such a long letter even if I could recollect the order of events without referring to my journal. I can only say at present that we have had a very gay winter, several parties from Peterborough and the neighbourhood have been up to see the back lakes and observe how we backwoodsmen live, and we in return, besides coming down to the Bachelors' Ball, which took place on the 27th ulto. are now undergoing a round of dancing, etc. which has kept us from home for a week already and promises to detain us a day or two more. Balls in Canada are no joke, when one comes forty miles to dance one does not like to make such a journey for a trifle and one takes a spell of dancing sufficient for an average winter at home. We commence at seven or eight and, as the roads are hardly safe for the ladies to drive home by in the dark, we contrived, on the 27th at least, to keep them employed till daylight. We had about forty dancing ladies present and when I came to reckon up in the morning I had danced with all but two and with some of them two and even three times. On the 13th inst., we had a grand ball at Major Sharp's which we kept up till half past five; last night at Col. Brown's we stayed till two, and to-night at Major Hamilton's we are going to keep it up as long as we can find any one to dance with. My share of the dancing will however not be so great as usual as I am engaged in the capacity of butler, etc. Besides these more formal parties we from the back lakes spend all our vacant evenings at Major Hamilton's where we generally of late have contrived to get up a dance. They are an extremely pleasant family with no nonsense or formality, but I have not yet been able to make up my mind with which of the three eldest daughters I am in love. Neither do I hear that McAndrew or Macredie have as yet made up their minds though all the world of Peterborough are of the opinion that we are three couples elect. In fact marrying and giving in marriage proceeds rapidly this year. Last year we had but one bridal party but this autumn we had two of our ladies carried off, one of them the belle of the district, and this winter two of my pleasantest partners have made their appearance at our balls as brides.

I do not remember any particular news on the back lakes except that Jameson's saw mill is in full operation; that of Need however will cost a good deal more

before it is well supplied with water.* The latter gentleman I am glad to inform you has become a great favourite with us all lately. As a companion, occasionally spending a Sunday with us, he is very amusing and exceedingly good natured. Upon the whole there is now great harmony amongst us and I hope it may continue.

We made a census of Verulam the other day and find that there are thirty three families, but in poor Fenelon the only settlers we yet muster are Jameson, Wallis, McAndrew, Macredie and myself and to keep these in order the late Commissioner of the peace has named three magistrates, namely the three first. I have still great hopes that next year may bring us a great accession of emigrants especially if Sir John Colborne remain in the Province, for he has been making all Canada jealous by his praises of our Lake and the fine set of young men who are settled there.

[A letter with narrative up to May 16 was lost in transit.]

TO HIS FATHER

Blythe, June 16th, 28th, 1835

As events are now of somewhat rare occurrence I must premise that on such days as are not particularly mentioned my occupation during this time has been working in my garden planting potatoes and Indian corn, and shooting pigeons, which have come upon us this year in immense flocks and devoured great quantities of my pease and oats as they do not however spread generally over the field but commence at one end and work their way regularly to the other, they do not cause as much mischief as they otherwise would; where they have been there is not a vestige of vegetation and we can sow something else, but the rest of the field is uninjured. . . .

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* Need records in his diary that the saw mill began working on April 8 1834.

You ask about the nature of swamps. I think I must have explained before. Wherever there is a spring rising, cedars which love a moist situation rise up; these in time fall down, but, as the wood is almost indestructible, the fallen trees lie on the ground in every direction for centuries, and in time block up the course of the stream; this of course soon spreads further its moisture and the same operation is constantly repeated until at last the swamp which was originally only around the spring, may extend through the whole valley. A drain however may in general be made at a trifling expense when you have once found out the spring, and at one or two dollars per acre more than hardwood you may clear the land, when all trace of swamp will disappear. These observations apply principally to patches of swamp of five to ten or fifteen acres which you find scattered through the hardwood land, and of its origin I feel convinced I have given the proper solution. Again, excepting where there is a great fall, the banks of creeks are almost universally accompanied by swamp for the same reasons, and by cutting out the logs which lie across the creek and otherwise adjusting the drainage, such land may be recovered at a trifling expense. But there are in some extensive valleys swamps of such dimensions that it would be an enormous expense to attempt recovering them, and as the land which they occupy belongs to perhaps twenty different individuals, it is almost hopeless to expect that for many years any concert can be established amongst them to concur in a system of drainage Still no one can deny that the swamps are the richest and best lands we have, and the majority of them might be easily drained but the clearing of a swamp always costs more than that of hardwood land, independent of the expense of draining, which among stumps is more difficult and expensive than such an operation would be at home and people prefer hardwood land from which they know they can get good crops for a year or two though ultimately I have no doubt the swamps will pay better Dry swamps appear to be caused much in the same way as the others only there being more natural fall, it is but here and there that the cedar intercepts the water though they cover half the ground in these there is always some mixture of hardwood such is the land into which I propose for the future to extend my clearing

As for botany—I carry it and a little ornithology on at intervals and am beginning to be acquainted with most of the plants and birds one commonly meets with but one is so much occupied with other things that these studies proceed slowly One cannot carry one's books about with one and if I see a new plant on my way to Peterborough I must leave it, as there is no chance of getting it home in a fit state to be examined and except when just round home one is always in such a hurry

This letter having been some time on hand I must continue my journal, which I left at the 14th from when until the 20th I remained quietly at home and I remember nothing much of importance 23rd From what we heard from Jameson it appeared that Major Hamilton and his lady expected us down to take them up to see our lakes it afterwards appeared the note to that effect had miscarried. However I left home at four a.m. and pulled down to McAndrew's to breakfast, and he and I went on to Peterborough and arrived to tea. The Major was unwell and would not return with us, but at half past four the next morning they sent to wake us and say he was ready to start. 24th. We got up and after breakfast walked to Mud Lake with the young ladies, the old gentleman and his lady riding; we pulled up to McAndrew's before sunset. His house was given up to the strangers and we went to sleep at Macredie's. 25th. Rowed home with Dennistoun[*] to breakfast and then put him up to the Falls and returned to McAndrew's to dinner and slept again at Macredie's. The Major who is in very delicate health was so fatigued he could not stir out all day. 26th. Home to breakfast; McAndrew and Tom Macredie pulled the Major and Mrs. Hamilton up to my house and thence to the Falls and to see some land of his on Cameron's Lake, and they returned to dinner with me. My dinner gave the last touch to my character as an Amphitryon. I have given more abundant dinners but never a more genteel or better cooked one. At the top fried bass, bottom haunch of venison done to a turn and kept to an hour, with currant jelly sauce, one side a brace of roasted partridges with bread sauce and the other a curry—A curry!!!—a bright effort of my own genius. A half dollar's worth of curry powder from Toronto has given six dishes for gala days; the material what was it? a cheek of common pickled pork boiled in three waters till all the salt and rancidity was away and then stewed down until very tender, the gravy a little enriched with portable soup—and an excellent dish it makes. And where did I get the currant jelly, you will enquire? Wallis kept bachelor's house at Montreal for some time, and upon coming up here divided some remaining pots of preserves amongst us. This may serve as hint if you send me out any preserves another year. Home to McAndrew's that night. The 27th. Pulled them down to Peterborough and drank tea there. 28th, to-day. Went to church and dined at the Major's, and stole an hour whilst the rest were walking to finish this letter, the latter part of which has been written almost in the dark; to-morrow we go home.

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[*] Mr. Robert Dennistoun who had recently, at the age of about twenty years, taken up land on Cameron Lake. Later he studied law and became a Q.C. and the County Judge for the County of Peterborough. In 1840 he married one of Major Hamilton's daughters.

To his Father

Fenelon, July 2nd, 1835.

As to the shoes I confess I did not say whether they fitted me or not. A man may increase a foot or more round the waist without enlarging sensibly across the instep, and were he to fatten to the size of Dan Lambert his feet would not grow seven-eighths of an inch longer. It certainly was a curious mistake of yours to suppose my shoes must be too small for me, especially as I said nothing about it; and to tell you the truth I did not imagine you ever did think so, but attributed your sending them to your known predilection to large shoes. They are however very wearable though, as might be expected, not quite so comfortable as those made to my measure, and I said nothing, knowing of old my small chance of persuading you that I knew the size of my feet better than you. But I cannot allow that it is my fault (not having told you how they fitted)

that you are now sending out a pair still larger. According to your principle—that if I do not cry out I am not much hurt—it might have been natural to send me more of the same size, but I do not know upon what system of logic you formed your reasoning that as I did not say these were too large they must necessarily be too small. Moss at the toes may do to correct an unavoidable evil, and loose shoes may do very well for a person who walks about the house or your smooth roads half slipshod, but on our rough roads and in our rougher woods I do not know a more fatiguing pest than a shoe too large. Excuse my warmth on the article of shoes,—it is intended to impress upon you that I do not want another pair larger still.

You have seen Mr. McAndrew, and my mother I see forms an idea of his brother from "his mild and agreeable manners and thoughtful expression." McAndrew's father died early and his brother had to perform the office of father for him, and having heard a great deal of him I feel quite acquainted with him, though I should have expected anything but "mild agreeable manners"—at any rate such are not the manners of A. McAndrew, he has almost overpowering animal spirits, and shares with his brother a temper very easily roused to something like violence, which however soon goes over, and which we know him too well to care about; with strangers however and especially ladies A. McAndrew can smooth his countenance to as mild and agreeable an expression as ever a Scotsman in Christendom.

Upon the subject of R. Birley it is a very difficult thing to advise. I feel inclined to think that a cleared farm is the most profitable situation though not so agreeable as the woods, but I think you overrate the difficulties and privations of the woods. You must remember that people coming up to our neighbourhood, for instance now, have not the tithe of the difficulties to encounter which McAndrew and I had who were the pioneers; and a person may go upon an uncleared farm if they prefer it without going so far as forty miles back from the nearest town. Even those who are only five or six miles from Peterborough call themselves backwoodsmen and Peterborough itself the great Metropolis is reckoned amongst semibarbarous regions by the dwellers in the front. I would not recommend any one except such as have been previously conversant with agriculture to take a cleared farm in full operation; but a farm with twenty or thirty acres in grass, and a sort of house or shanty upon it, may be bought within five or six miles of a market as cheap almost as wild land, and such a space cleared is an immense advantage as it enables a person at once to commence with cows and oxen. When I came out here first everybody here was mad from the sudden rise which land had taken all round Peterborough; and no price was so exorbitant that some purchaser was not to be found. Cleared farms consequently anywhere near Peterborough (which was the centre of this mania) bore an immoderately high price, or perhaps I might not have been a backwoods man. The cause of this was in part the sudden raising of the Government price of wild land, which enabled some speculators to get cent per cent in a month or two; and partly the real start that Peterborough had taken the two previous years, which sanguine men thought would continue for ever; and in a great measure also to Mr Bethune (whom I must have mentioned), who was then the great man of this part of the world, and who now

has turned out to be a most sanguine but most reckless and unprincipled speculator. Last year came a reaction, but this year things I think are at about their fair value, though I think I do see some symptoms which a large emigration backed by the example of an influential speculator might ripen into another mania, against the efforts of which I would caution any new emigrant.

Besides the exorbitant price of cleared land when I came out, I was influenced in going into the backwoods partly by the sort of interest which attaches to the life of a pioneer, partly by the pleasant situation and prospect of agreeable society on our lakes, and partly by my opinion, which still remains unchanged, that, however it may be delayed, the time must come when these lakes will become very valuable. I shall yet see a town at Cameron's Falls taking the lead of Peterborough.

I was led away with the rest of the mania and thought that our time would come sooner than it has. Our township after being unknown for eight or ten years took a sudden start and I supposed would continue to improve. All last year however it remained stationary or nearly so. Jameson, whose interest it certainly was to promote settlement, was so busy with making love and wandering about the country after one speculation or another, that with the exception of building his mill he did nothing; he has 12,000 acres of land and has not brought up one settler. Now however we are going to get another start, which I hope will not be so rapid but more continuous—*nous verrons*.

6th. Having been so unfortunate as to miss the Rev

Mr. Bettridge* I determined to lose no more time but to take advantage of an idle time, that might not occur again before harvest, and take John Menzies' three children down to be christened. Started at half past five and got down to Peterborough after dark. 7th. Stood godfather to all the three and sent them off in my boat home, remaining myself to go up with Dennistoun, having had quite enough of my passengers. On my road down I heard that Major Hamilton's mill had been burnt down on the 4th, and upon arriving found it was too true. The sawmill, gristmill, distillery and brewery had all been burnt down in three-quarters of an hour, 1,000 bushels of grain, 3,000 gallons of whiskey, forty barrels of ale and several of flour had been consumed, nothing but one barrel of whiskey and the bolting cloth from the mill were saved. Nothing was insured. The Major, to whom from his delicate health I thought it would have been fatal, bears it astonishingly. He was ill of the ague at the time, which I am afraid he caught on our lakes, but the fire stopped it immediately. I should have been the more alarmed by such a shock to the constitution if it had not been for an attack of the gout which it revived. I sat with him by his bedside for some time yesterday and he talked most cheerfully of rebuilding everything immediately. In the evening he sent to desire I would come and drink tea with him and he took as much interest in all our proceedings and our hopes for the progress of the back lakes as if nothing had occurred to himself in the meantime.

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* Mr. Bettridge was a clergyman at Woodstock who had accompanied the son of Admiral Vansittart on a visit of inspection to Balsam Lake where Admiral Vansittart was proposing to make a large purchase.

[It is not intended that the extracts made from these letters should be biographical; but the diary of a month which follows is brief, and is suggestive of the social side of backwoods life.]

To his Father

Blythe, Aug. 12, 1835

My letter of the 8th July (concluded at least on that day) told you of my journey down and the bad news that awaited me there; the cause of my delay was partly my having sent my boat off on the 7th, and being consequently dependent upon others for my return, and partly that Mrs. M. pressed me so warmly to stay a little longer, alleging (which was manifestly true) that the Major was much the better for having somebody to talk to and keep his spirits up. What I did each day is hard to say. Immediately after breakfast I generally spent an hour by the Major's bedside, after which I as regularly found my way among the young ladies where two or three more hours used to pass away in conversation, my hands being kept employed in the ignoble occupation of unpicking, marking, darning, etc.; another visit to the Major concluded the morning. After an hour or two for dinner a chat or walk with the ladies occupied the afternoon; the Major generally appeared at tea, and after he had retired chat, music, etc., concluded the day. All very agreeable but exceedingly unprofitable, and you may perhaps say that the Major's daughters had as much to do with my stay as the Major himself—may be. However on the 15th, having been relieved from my post by McAndrew, I departed, and travelled up to

Bobcaygeon by a scow which now plies regularly twice a week, and thence on home next day

The 19th, being Sunday, I killed a fatted calf (to wit a sucking pig) and proclaimed a feast, which was attended by Jameson, Dennistoun, Need Tarbutt and William Hamilton, the two Macredies* having gone down to Peterborough. Need having brought up his dogs we had a hunt in the morning—of the 20th—but lost the deer however he stayed all day with me, and the next morning and again in the evening we had another unsuccessful hunt. Finally however on the morning of the 22nd we killed the deer Need and William Hamilton returned to Bobcaygeon, Jameson and Dennistoun to the Falls and Tarbutt remained my guest. The rest of the week was occupied with underbrushing the flat by the creek side The 26th, Sunday, a second feast was proclaimed and a second pig died The guests were Need, Wm Hamilton Robt Hamilton, McAndrew, the two Macredies Dennistoun and Tarbutt McAndrew, the Macredies and Dennistoun went home, the rest stayed and killed a deer before breakfast next morning. 28th. Need went home This week all hands, guests and all, were underbrushing The 31st. Two strangers arrived to dinner and stayed all night. Aug. 1st Tarbutt left me. 2nd, Sunday The Macredies dined here and took R. Hamilton away Wm. Hamilton and I underbrushed chopped, and carpentered during the week The 8th. News having arrived that the frame of Major Hamilton s new distillery was up Wm. Hamilton s holyday was over and he left us 9th. We all met at dinner at McAndrew s 10th. I commenced reaping what promises to be a very good crop, but we are rather short of hands as two of my men contrived to cut their feet whilst chopping last week, but they are both limping along with the rest to-day. I muster in all—John, James (cut himself), his wife and three children, but one of the girls is obliged to help a good deal at the cooking. As the wheat is ripening much faster in some parts of the field than others we have taken the earlier parts first and shall easily get through it I hope before it gets too ripe. The 10th, 11th and this morning have been awful days, the thermometer above ninety degrees and not a breath of wind, but just at dinner time a thunder storm came on and it has settled into a wet afternoon. So much for my journal up to to-day.

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* A younger brother Tom had arrived early in June.

One thing occurs to me which I must say now. McAndrew tells me that he has written very despondently upon the subject of the country to his brother and his brother seems to have spoken to you upon the subject. I am surprised you did not allude to it. Canada is decidedly not the country we any of us thought it was, but I do not go by any means the length that McAndrew does. I still think and hope that a livelihood may be made here, but this I foresee—that Sturgeon Lake will be a very changed place in a few years. McCall is already lost,[*] Sawers may be considered gone, and Atthill is very doubtful. Jameson, if he had not gone so far already, I am sure would like to back out, and Need is a very doubtful and uncertain person. As for McAndrew and the Macredies, my more particular and intimate friends, I feel almost confident that this time next year their houses will be shut up. What they are going to do I do not know, nor do they probably themselves, but I see plainly they are not for this country. As to my opinions upon the capabilities of the country I refer you to a book on Canada and the States by Patrick Shirreff. He is a conceited Scotchman, and evidently has at starting a prejudice against Canada, but, making due allowance for that, his account seems to me the fairest and most practical of any I have seen; the account of Illinois however must be received I think with very great caution and very heavy deductions must be made from his praises before you will reach the truth. Get the book and read it.

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[*] He returned to England and not long afterwards, died.

TO HIS FATHER

Blythe, Oct. 10th, 1835.

My last brought you up to the 12th, or I think in a postscript to the 16th of August and from thence to the end of the month not one day occurs to me either *alba* or *nigra creta notandus*, or to speak more classically *creta aut carbone notandus*. The 2nd September was a day we had been looking forward to, expecting to mark it in our calendars with the whitest of the former substance. Mrs. Hamilton and her daughters had promised us a visit and McAndrew and Macredie had gone down on the first to row them up to Bobcaygeon, whilst Dennistoun and I went in a canoe to receive them there and relieve the others. The Major had quite recovered, the new mill and distillery were rapidly rising and he was in the highest spirits, but the news reached us at Bobcaygeon that he had had a paralytic stroke and was hardly expected to survive.

Dennistoun and I being so far on our road determined to proceed and arrived at Peterborough that evening. Finding the two Macs dining out we waited up till they returned and then sat up so long talking that at last it was voted useless to go to bed. About five they set off home, and Dennistoun and I having polished our backwoods integuments a little wrote some letters, made some calls, etc., and getting off from Peterborough about three p.m. reached McAndrew's before midnight only about an hour after the others who had drawn up their boat and had a sleep on the road. After a good supper (part of the preparations for the ladies) and a pipe we slept as you may imagine not ill till morning. This is the last time I have been down, but from accounts the other day it appears that the Major, though a long time in a hopeless state, is again for the twentieth time recovering from the very verge of the grave.

Things on the farm did not go on so well as could be desired. The wheat was an excellent crop and the first days of harvest fine enough, but from the day I wrote to you until to day there have not been I think two, but certainly not three fine days together. The consequence is that hardly a farmer in the country can show a sample of wheat entirely free from sprouted grains, and a great deal of the wheat and most of the oats are yet out in the field. I have been much more fortunate than many, though the harvest has been very expensive from the great loss of time in opening out and covering the stocks as a short gleam of sunshine or an impending shower called us away from the reaping. I still got the produce of fifteen and a half acres of wheat and six of oats saved before most of my neighbours, and though I can only rely on one stack as perfectly free from sprouted grain the rest makes very good bread, and with the exception of McAndrew's, which was almost all saved the first fine week, it is reported to be the best which has appeared yet at Purdy's mills.

The quantity as well as the quality surprised me also—twenty five bushels per acre is often talked of but all the old farmers say they have seldom seen more than eighteen however mine, notwithstanding two or three bushels per acre lost by shedding, from the constant shifting about of the stooks and nearly as much more which is growing so badly as to be fit only for the pigs will yield nearly if not quite twenty five bushels per acre fit to go to the mill at least as far as I have yet threshed out By to-morrow night too I shall have finished raising my potatoes on four and a half acres which will yield rather more than 1,000 bushels An acre and half of Swedish and near two acres of white turnips with a small patch of mangel wurzel, of peas and of corn complete my crops of this year The wheat and oats were sown in the spring with grass and clover but this has so completely failed that I shall have to sow it almost all over again next spring and thus shall lose a great deal of time in fact in about five acres of wheat stubble I think I shall not repeat the grass, but drag in oats in the spring The land which was under potatoes and turnips I shall have in spring wheat and barley next year and I have about eight acres of wheat sown on new land this fall. I have also some eight acres or more chopped and burnt ready to log up in the spring for potatoes and turnips, but the rain in harvest time has stopped my burn on the small strip down to the lake and on the patch along the creek which I mentioned I was chopping in my last, and the latter at any rate cannot be burnt till the middle of next summer

I tried both kinds of Cobbett's corn and both kinds have yielded cobs twice the size of the original ones which looks as if they liked the country The smaller

kind is certainly much earlier than the common corn but does not seem to yield so large a crop (I have not yet ascertained the quantity per acre), and at any rate the gathering and husking is twice as laborious as it would be in a larger sort. The larger I planted too late; it seemed to thrive better than the corn usually does, but has not fully ripened, and these last few nights my cattle have taken care that I shall not be able to estimate the crop per acre, but I should think it quite an average one. Next year I will try patches of six kinds, Cobbett's two, the common corn, the cinquantina, and two sorts that McAndrew has got from Portugal.

Here followeth a lamentation upon the climate of Canada. Last summer but one they say was an extraordinary summer; it was very hot and dry, so much so that the lakes and rivers were hardly navigable in parts and that potatoes and turnips produced very ill. Very hot it certainly was, but upon reference to my journal I find, that after a spell of fine weather that had long since melted the snow and coaxed on the vegetation, on the 14th of May there came a frost the Lord only knows how many degrees below the freezing point, but such as to cause the icicles to hang a foot long from the roofs and the spray to form a cake of ice on the oars and paddles. The poor plants which were beginning to show their noses above ground in the gardens and fields! It appears also that on two or three mornings in the latter end of June there was ice of tolerable thickness at sunrise, which of course would prove satisfactory to corn, cucumbers, kidney beans and other tender vegetables. It appears too that on the night of Sunday the 28th September there came a frost that laid my potatoes as flat and turned them as black as if they had never been either green or upright. From the 14th May to the 28th September is four months and fifteen days to which this extraordinarily hot summer was limited, for the two frosts which bound this period were sufficient to kill any vegetable thing of moderate delicacy of constitution which might be above ground, not to mention the slight warnings of their fate which they received in June. By a further reference to the same authority I perceive that being on our road down to Peterborough on the 30th October we were stopped by ice and on the 12th December the lake bore for the first time from McAndrew's and even then it would not have borne a much heavier weight than mine, or indeed myself, if I had not been on snowshoes. Here then is a period of one month and thirteen days when we had neither ice nor water to travel on. Last winter they say was an extraordinarily cold one. Cold enough certainly, a great many potatoes were frosted in their pits and root houses through the country, my calf lost an ear and would have lost his nose if we had not taken him to live in the kitchen, and many mornings my cattle, having lain down during the night, were so stiff that we got them up with difficulty when the sun had been an hour or two up. In this helpless state it is said many cattle were eaten alive by the pigs. Well, but it was extraordinarily cold last winter, likewise I suppose it was extraordinarily long, at least the navigation was stopped on the 20th October and on the 25th April I had to break through the ice to get my boat launched when going down to Peterborough, giving a period of five months and twenty six days of winter, and for upwards of a month the ice had ceased to be safe for anything but foot passengers. This spring there was no remarkable late frost but the weather long continued cold, and seeds sown in the latter part of May soon got the start of those sown earlier. It may be too much to attribute to the climate the caterpillars that destroyed my wheat and the pigeons which commenced upon my peas and oats and, as far as they went, cleared the ground so effectually you never would have guessed anything had been sown, more especially as they were said to be in unusual quantities this year. And I suppose I must be content with the same excuse for my grass and clover seeds having failed, for the fly having eaten three sowings of Swedish turnips and two of mangelwurzel, and notwithstanding repeated sowings having left me in the garden one solitary eatable radish and not a plant of any kind of cabbage; not to mention the nameless insect or whatever it is that ate off day by day as they appeared above ground the young plants of celery, lettuce, carrots and onions (N.B. onions from seed—from top onions I have a good crop—did you ever see top onions in England?) so that I have none of the two former and not above a handful of each of the latter. The next black day in my calendar is the 5th or 6th August when we had a frost which though it did me little or no harm killed many an acre of potatoes in low situations back in the bush. It is one great advantage that we have near the lake and in high and dry situations that we feel no ill effects from frosts which destroy everything in back clearings where one would have thought the bush would give them shelter. I say nothing of our wet harvest because I believe that it at any rate is an almost unprecedented occurrence and I must acknowledge that that inexorable fellow the frost has treated us on the Lake shore at least very leniently this fall. My kidney beans and tomatoes only yielded to his power the morning I began this letter. I wonder that I can have written this Philippic against the climate of Canada at a moment when for a week past (to day is the 15th) I have been enjoying weather which if I looked only to my comfort I would wish to last all the year round. We are in the middle of the Indian summer, with slight frosts at night and the thermometer seldom above fifty four or fifty five in the day, but the sky is without a cloud and the lake unruffled by the slightest breath of air, so that you may hear the wild ducks splashing about at a mile off; a slight haze spread over the face of the country is perhaps all you would wish away. I don't know whether this Indian summer is as healthy as it is agreeable, at any rate I have somehow or other caught a cold which may perhaps have inspired me with a little extra acerbity, but I give you simple facts and

"Facts are chiels that winna ding
An' downa be disputed."

Oct. 16. One more drawback to this climate I must mention and that is—ague. We used to think Sturgeon Lake almost exempt, and certainly it is better than Ops and some other places, but Need, Boyd* and both Mr. and Mrs. Fraser set the example this spring at the lower end, and after having sent down both Major Hamilton and one of his sons with an attack during the summer it has now fairly commenced amongst ourselves; McAndrew and both the Macredies have had slight attacks. I don't believe that care is of any avail in keeping off the ague, at least we have now been for two summers oftener wet than dry I believe and yet we felt no ill effects, whilst other cautious people—Need and Boyd for instance—took it. It must be acknowledged however that the night when McAndrew's symptoms first appeared he had been up to the knees in the lake and sat all evening and slept all night in the same clothes; and in consequence of this warning I have since been more cautious. The Macredies were always rather given to changing stockings, and Jameson's projected marriage had already wrought a wonderful change in him. When I first came up the lakes I carried a spare pair of socks, and they were alternately on my feet and drying in the sun, but I soon got tired of that. In fact in summer one cannot keep dry; if you walk in the bush you come occasionally upon a swamp; if you go in a canoe you have on shallow shores to step into the water to avoid hurting the bark; and our boats, what with the original imperfection of their structure, the cracks which the heat of the sun forms and the rough usage they get in drawing them up on stony shores, by concussions in rapids, etc. by which their seams are opened, are never so tight but that our feet get wet in them, not to mention the wading which we are not yet free from. However it does not much signify if the only ill effect is an occasional fit of ague, from which even otherwise we could not reckon upon being free.* You will plainly see from the whole tenor of this letter that Canada is, not in my opinion that Eldorado which most of the books you see at home would fain have it believed, but still I have not given the country up. The greatest difficulties are now over and I will give it a fair chance before I condemn it. The settlers who have come out within these last few years are falling off by degrees, but new ones are still coming as confident and high in hopes as their predecessors were. I am told that numbers are deserting Lake Simcoe and other pet settlements. As for us, numbers have never come amongst us as yet, but we are losing some of our few. Dudley is off to join Col. Evans in Spain I believe, the Macredies are still putting off their departure but they will not linger through next summer. Jameson, if it had not been for his projected marriage, would have been off too and McAndrew you will see in little more than a month after you receive this. He having been sanguine had gone I think into the other extreme, but still intended trying the country one year more. The news however of his brother's failure in Liverpool has decided him and he will leave us almost immediately.† He will be a great loss to our society; however society will be a very secondary consideration with me next winter. I am going to keep no servant, and as I shall have twelve pigs and the cattle to look after I shall never be able to leave home. Perhaps Dennistoun and the Macredies may come to see me once a fortnight, but otherwise I shall be my own company.

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*Mr. Mossom Boyd of Bobcaygeon. He came out in 1834 at the age of 19 and settled on the north shore of Sturgeon Lake about half way between Bobcaygeon and Sturgeon Point. A person of great energy and industry, he was said to have chopped his clearing himself. He was the only one of the settlers who stayed on the lake and he prospered in his tenacity. He bought Mr. Need's mill property in Bobcaygeon, and did a large lumbering business from that centre, until his death in 1883, the business continuing in the hands of his sons. In the beginning of his career as a lumberer he rafted square timber to Quebec to be shipped to Europe, after the manner then practised. John Langton was for some time partner with him in this business, and gives some account of it in these letters.

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* We knew more about ague when it came to its climax in 1846 when whole families lay helpless together, and somebody who might be able, had to get in their harvests. In a note made many years afterwards, he said, "There were a great many deaths principally the very old and the very young and sometimes we had difficulty in finding men strong enough to carry the coffins up to the churchyard." It is noteworthy that a letter written in the ague year by another member of the Blythe family says, 'The mosquitoes have been a dreadful plague this summer. I never knew them so numerous.'"

† Mr. McAndrew returned to England to go into business in Liverpool, but in 1847 went to New York where he carried on a successful forwarding business, retiring to England in 1870.

I have run on at such a rate about climate, crops, etc., that I have no room left to answer your letters; I must however acknowledge receipt of the two packages, all the contents of which were very welcome, but the stock and waistcoat might have been dispensed with, as they are articles of attire which I never wear. I couldn't help smiling when I unpacked them, so strongly did they contrast with my usual dress, viz., white trousers or such as were white on Sunday morning, a red shirt open at the breast and tucked up above the elbows—*et voilà tout*—a coat never comes over my back except at Peterborough, or when I call on Mrs. Frazer. I do however carry a coat about with me—a blanket coat, the most comfortable and lasting wear I know, but it is seldom used except to sleep in at strange houses though very useful to kneel on in my canoe. This summer Robert Hamilton,* whose head-quarters here were at McAndrew's stayed a week with me, and the day before he went two strangers dined at my house. To do them honour I put on a coat to dinner and said very gravely to Robert "Bob, put on your coat." Alas we found out after some hunting that the coat had never left McAndrew's—What a long story of coats!

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* The Hon. Robert Hamilton, second son of Major Hamilton. He was at this time eleven years old, having been born in Ireland in 1834. He entered the service of the Hudson's Bay Company in which he rose to be general inspector. After the settlement following the Riel Rebellion he became a member of the North West Council. He married the daughter of Robt. S. Miles, chief factor of the Hudson's Bay Company.

Peterborough, Oct. 22. McAndrew has sold his place and will be off in a fortnight to the regret of everybody I never knew such an universal favourite. His successor is a Mr Hackett, a West Indian with a family He himself will take possession immediately and he expects his family to join him He is a very *débonnaire* sort of a man about forty or forty five but however agreeable he may be he must suffer by a comparison with McAndrew

Admiral Vansittart* bought 24,000 acres at the sale and he is bound to bring out thirty families next summer Mr Rebridge who is his managing man is to live on Balsam Lake this winter and go himself for the settlers next spring

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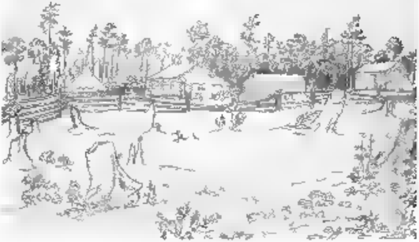
*Admiral Vansittart, though his house was near Woodstock, had afterwards a home on Balsam Lake; a log house which is still in use, as part of a larger residence.

POLITICS, AN ELECTION, CHURCH BUILDING, ETC



BLYTHE THE ORIGINAL SETTLEMENT

A sketch by Anne Langton

The barn was built soon after his return (p. 174)
The tent was set up as a dining room for his friends, when he kept bachelor's house
in the old quarters while the family lived in the new house (p. 184)

LETTERS OF 1836 AND 1837

[Since the date of the previous letter a visit had been paid to England recorded by a letter describing the return voyage from Liverpool to Boston which took thirty days, from May 10th to June 9th, 1836]

To his Father

Blythe June 21st, 1836

You see from my date that I am once more at home; but before I tell you how I found things here I must first conduct myself so far

I wrote to you on the voyage and concluded my letter as the pilot came on board. This was Thursday and the same evening I landed in Boston and having taken leave of my fellow passengers continued wandering about the city till bed time. In point of regularity and the beauty of its public buildings it is inferior to Philadelphia and in size and business of course it ranks below New York but I prefer it much to either It is the only American city I have seen where the dwellings of the rich stand together unconnected with the stores and warehouses. Here there are many streets containing nothing but handsome houses and most of them in small gardens and the streets are lined with magnificent chestnuts horse chestnuts, walnuts, elms and plane trees which often completely meet over the street. Besides these there is a very handsome and extensive park in the city with beautiful rows of trees much superior to the public walk at New York, and the public buildings are many of them very handsome

[The journey from Boston to Oswego was by way of the Hudson River and Oswego Canal, as in 1833 but on this occasion railways came in as connecting links; one from Boston to Providence to take the boat by Long Island to New York and a second from Albany to Schenectady where the canal trip began.]

At Oswego I met Mr Stewart[*] of Peterborough and his daughters who told me all the news of Upper Canada, which is of considerable importance. The House of Assembly as you will have heard stopped the supplies[†] and the Governor has dissolved them. Several of the old bureaucracy thinking I suppose to be wiser than your Lords at home, have yielded to the Radical party and deserted Sir Francis[‡] in his struggle with the House of Assembly and their places in the Executive Council have been filled up by better men I take it they rather repent their false move I think likewise the Radicals perceive their mistake by this time they have touched the people in their pockets the ill effects of their measures have been felt in every man's private concerns and it will take a great deal of their oratory upon the speculative question—whether the Executive Council is to be responsible to the people of Canada or the Colonial office—to make men forget the tangible evils produced by the stopping the supplies. The effect of this measure has been besides the inconvenience which must necessarily result everywhere from such a step, that the money, which had been granted for roads, canals etc. all over the country, cannot be expended. Now the cry in Canada has always been—open us the navigation of this river or grant us money to make that road; and now, when more money had been granted than usual for such purposes and every body was cock-a-hoop, the disappointment is proportionately great when those sanguine expectations are suddenly crushed. Besides, there is hardly a farmer anywhere who had not proposed to himself to get good wages this summer at some of these works, or to find a demand for his pork or flour in consequence, or to reap some private benefit himself besides the general improvement resulting to the country. And it unfortunately happens that, just at the time these works here are stopped, our neighbours in the United States have been dividing amongst the several states large sums of the public money for erecting fortifications and for other public works, and great numbers of the Canadians, in want of work at home, have gone across the lakes. The consequence has been that addresses have poured in to the Governor from every quarter calling upon him to dissolve the House, and in my opinion now that the call has been obeyed not half of the Radicals will be returned again. It appears to me to be an important crisis, and though the country may not go entirely to the dogs if the Radical party get into power again (which is the general opinion) at any rate it will have the effect I know of deterring many people from investing capital here and even induce others who have embarked to draw out—if they can. The governor appears to be a very clever and most determined man, but I must say I don't like the style of his answers to the addresses; they may be suited to the majority of those he addresses, but there is a great want of dignity in them; he talks too much of himself and condescends too much in attacking the Radicals, whilst the style is almost colloquial and many of them look almost like electioneering addresses. However they take wonderfully with the *profanum vulgus*. In one of these performances he certainly shews up the Radicals famously; it appears that under the name of Commissioners for public works, for school lands and for one thing and another these chaps have been voting away to each other sundry large sums, and Sir Francis has published a list of them, in which appear Peter Perry (the Radical leader) for seven commissionerships £1,500 a year, Bidwell (the speaker of the house and late leader) £400, and many others. Peter Perry has canvassed three places but has no chance whatever. Mackenzie, who was the O'Connell of Canada, the great author of the Grievance Report, has voted against many of his own grievances because the Governor was ready to redress them, and, though he will come in, he will be comparatively innocuous, the very Radicals are ashamed of him.

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[*] Hon. Thos. Alexander Stewart. (See Note p. 7)

[†] An error corrected on p. 171.

[‡] Sir Francis Bond Head, who succeeded Sir John Colborne.

Upon the whole, I rather like the appearance of things; the Radicals have gone a step too far and I hope we shall hear little more of them for some years to come. But one Act they have passed which, though praised by everybody I have spoken with, will, if well considered, do great injury I think to the country. With a view to prevent the exportation of specie to the States—and the banks there have lately been running upon banks here considerably—our legislative wisdom has ordained that an English shilling which used to pass for 1s 2d shall henceforth be a legal tender at 1s 3d and a sovereign which used to vary with the exchange from 23s 6d to 24s shall be of the value of 24s 4d. Now it appears to me that this difference is

so great that it would be worth while for the merchant in Lower Canada and the States to import English silver and force it upon us in payment for our grain, etc. at 1/3 p. shilling, whereas when we come to buy them they will only take it at its intrinsic value which is scarcely 1/2¼ at the usual rate of exchange, whereby upon every such double transaction Upper Canada will be a loser of about six or seven per cent. What effect will it have on the exchange? Many people instead of drawing upon England will import specie no doubt and the exchange will rise *pro tanto*, but what effect it will have on the exchange between here and Montreal or the States I can't make out. One thing however is certain, that the passing of this Act put £15,000 into the pockets of the Bank of Upper Canada, and it is a curious coincidence that full one half of the House of Assembly and nineteen-twentieths of the Legislative Council are deeply interested in the said Bank. But though they made such a profit upon the specie in their vaults, it may not be so much to their advantage after all, for besides the loss they must sustain in their interchange of notes with the States banks, the amount of British silver which will flow into the country will very much diminish their issues of notes I should think.

Whilst upon the subject of banks I may as well observe that the Land Bank which I told you of has totally failed, but some gentlemen about Peterborough have taken it up with some modifications and are about starting it again. I have no confidence either in them or their system and would not take their notes to any amount. Our Farmers Bank however is in a flourishing condition I understand and a branch of the Com-

mercial Bank is about to be established at Peterborough.

This has been a very long digression I must now return to my journey but you must expect another touch at politics in my next after the election.

I left you last at Cobourg on Thursday morning After breakfast I joined Mr Stewart in a waggon up to Peterborough, raining tremendously all the day Blythe at last came in sight, all right and where it used to be, and we found Dennistoun and Gowin and Bob Hamilton with Tom* on their road from the mill. John Menzies was almost out of his senses for joy for he was much alarmed with the responsibility that would rest with him if I had not come out before Tom left and my letter to Tom not having arrived they were in the dark respecting me. John paid me the compliment to say that "By gosh and by golly he was as glad as if I had been his father" In excuse for his vagaries I must say that the previous day being the 18th† (this unexpected date shews me my letter ought to be dated the 22nd) John had gone to visit Wallis and upon stating that there was no whiskey at Blythe and that by an article in his agreement with me he was secured the right of getting drunk on that day, the necessary article was supplied and the effects might not have worn off However all were glad to see me and not the least old Neptune who sat looking at me and brushing the floor with his tail by the hour

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*Tom Macredie, the younger brother The elder Macredie had accompanied the writer to England and did not come out again. He and his brother, after other adventures, finally settled in Australia. About 1870 there came to Ottawa from Australia a long letter from W. A. Macredie who, having seen in a newspaper a notice concerning public accounts of Canada which was signed John Langton, wrote an account of his doings since 1836.

† The anniversary of Waterloo.

John was dispatched to the Falls for Wallis and Mr McLaren and we spent a pleasant evening.

Monday, after all were gone Tom and I went over the farm and found everything most satisfactory excepting the destruction of some hundred bushels of potatoes by the frost and a field of four acres of wheat so destroyed by the surface water pouring down in the spring that it was resown with barley.

Tom has been most industrious and economical, rather too much of the latter if all stories are true—of his living on bread and milk for a week and going to dine with Wallis on a Sunday to repair the waste of the system. At any rate when I arrived there was nothing in the house but flour, potatoes and milk, and a chance haunch of venison. Tom has kept most accurate accounts upon a system of his own invention which amused me so much I will give you a specimen. Thus, some items from May:

Whom	*When*	*Things given away*	*Things rec'd.*
The cow	2nd		a heifer.
John	3rd		a day's work.
Alexander	5th	4½ lbs. salt	
Little sow	7th		6 little pigs.
Weather	9th		the first shower of rain.
Boyd	20th	The black ox (lent)	
Myself	22nd		the tooth of a rake in my foot — most horribly sore.

Tom was a good deal cast down when first he got his recall,* but he is getting reconciled now though he still says whenever he is his own master he will return. About a month ago he got the ague and took so little care of himself that Wallis took him up to the Falls and put John Menzies in possession of Blythe. The ague is bad this year but he and Mrs. Fraser are the only persons who have had it on the lake yet. The gentlemen at the lower end want to join us in the parson but want a church of their own and propose spending some of their money on it;* if he does go occasionally there to do duty it must only be in proportion to their share of the funds Wallis and Dennistoun have got about £150 and expect a little more Jameson has got no answer, if he has written which from his dilatoriness is doubtful. He has never brought his wife up and I think will go home Capt Dobbs is coming out again. I think I must have mentioned the expected settlement of Capt. Purdon and his family they are now up and their house nearly ready His friend Capt Davidson is also to be a settler There is a report of the admiral's settlement being given up, but they are still going on Wallis takes admirably to the country is very industrious and has made astonishing improvements at the Falls The rye grass and trefoil are working very well.

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* Brought by the writer from the elder Macredie, then in England.

I go down to the election to-morrow but probably shall not go to Toronto for three weeks—they are too busy at the Government offices to attend to me.

To his Father

Toronto, July 13 1836

In my last letter concluded at Peterborough I brought my motions down to the time when I was

starting for the election.* Tom Macredie was left at my house in charge, though with the exception of weeding potatoes there was nothing to take charge of, and Wallis, Dennistoun, Gavin Hamilton and I went down in Wallis's new gig.

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* Need describes the opening of a church in "our settlement," which should mean Rokeby and Bobcaygeon, on March 6 1836.

Before I get you any farther on the road I must introduce you to the Calypso, who will cut a prominent figure in the events of the ensuing week.

The Calypso, (for you must know that the whole naval armament belonging to Fenelon Falls whether canoes, scows, skiffs or boats are all named after some of the characters of the Archbishop of Cambray's epic), the Calypso I say is a two oared gig brought out by Wallis from Glasgow, and, though being built solely for speed she is much too slight to carry a load or be of general use in such a rough country as ours, she is extremely convenient to go down to Peterborough in and she will serve as a model by which our boat builders may improve.

As the Calypso was destined to carry the honoured weight of our candidate McDonell it became necessary after she had carried us to Mud Lake that we should carry her to Peterborough † and as the road had been newly ploughed (a manner of equalising the ruts and holes which is called turnpikeing in this primitive country) and there had been heavy rains for a week before I can assure you we had no sinecure. We picked up three volunteers by the way and they occasionally gave us a spell but nevertheless we were unanimously agreed that though very light on her own element the Calypso is confoundedly heavy on a ploughed road, a

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[*] The Sally election. The candidates were Henry Ruttan, Alexander McDonell, George M. Boswell and Dr. John Gilchrist. The last was in sympathy with Mackenzie. McDonell was elected.

[†] Usually called six or six and one-half miles.

truth to which two black patches on my shoulders testify to this day. The old steamer on the Otonabee which had been sunk last fall below Peterborough, having been raised and refitted to carry down our voters, was now ready and was starting the next morning for the Rice Lake to tow up two large scows to serve in the same cause; but unfortunately as the steamer, like everything else here, was in debt and the creditor was a leading Radical below, a report was spread that she was to be seized at the Rice Lake and Wallis was requested to take down his crew in her for the double purpose of throwing the bailiff into the lake if he ventured on board and of keeping an eye on the Captain who was too well known as a Radical to be trusted so far alone. We four accordingly with T. Fortune, a younger brother of J. R. F.,[*] and Wallis's servant went down in her well armed with shillelaghs, and after a tedious navigation of a day and a night returned without even the satisfaction of making a bailiff to duck.

On Monday morning at five o'clock we started with the steamer full of voters and the Calypso in tow until we came within six or seven miles of Sully on the Rice Lake where the election was held, when we took McDonell with Messrs. Shaw and Kirkpatrick[†] on board, and Dennistoun and I pulled them on to Sully, beating the steamer by half a mile—or rather keeping our distance for we got nearly as much start of her. We stayed on the ground till all the speeches were over and

then rowed off to Spoke Island about a mile and a half from Sully in the middle of the lake, which we had fixed upon for our encampment and which for the future, in honour of the cause, has been named Constitution Island.

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[*] J. B. Fortune, who married one of the daughters of Major Hamilton.

[†] Mr. Stafford Frederick Kirkpatrick, a barrister, later Q.C., who at this time, at the age of 25, was settled in Peterborough. He afterwards went to Kingston to join his brother Thomas, the father of Sir George Airey Kirkpatrick, Lieut.-Governor of Ontario from 1892 to 1897.

We had brought down with us a large marquée which had served as a hospital tent during the emigration of '25 and '26,* and as a raft touched at the island in the afternoon we impressed sundry boards which made us a long table and benches. The island is about twenty or thirty acres in size and beautifully situated to command a view of the other islands and the whole extent of the lake, and, being covered with natural grasses and only a few oak trees and shrubs scattered about it, it made an excellent situation for an encampment. Our party consisted besides ourselves of Shaw and Kirkpatrick,—Wallis's man attended as cook, etc. We each brought from Peterborough lots of cold prog., this with venison and fish which we got from the Indians afforded us good living and we always had half a dozen guests, either of our friends at Peterborough or of the gentlemen who came up to vote from other parts of the county besides our candidate who usually spent the evening with us, and we often had very good speechifying. We spent a very pleasant week altogether and if our presence was not very useful to the cause (Wallis being the only voter) we certainly added much to the animation of the scene. The beautiful little Calypso with her flags flying and her crew all dressed alike in striped guernsey frocks white trowsers and low straw hats with blue ribbands, and each a British ensign as a scarf rowing to and from the island and taking out the candidates every morning to address the electors as they came in in the steamboat was a sight that Rice Lake had never seen before—I guess

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* The emigration of Irish settlers to Peterborough under Peter Robinson, who was afterwards made Commissioner of Crown Lands.

All this is very ridiculous on paper but in the midst of an election it is another thing.

On the Friday we pulled to the head of the lake which is about four miles from the polling booth for the County of Durham where I gave my vote but for this solitary vote which was not wanted we lost all the fun at Sully the Radicals having given in during our absence McDonell and Ruttan being 176 ahead and 65 voters in possession of the polling booth Upon hearing the news we hurried back and by our haste lost the fun at Durham likewise, the Radicals there giving in half an hour after

The next day we packed up our duds and returned up the Otonabee in tow of the steamer but something having gone wrong she had to stop so often that at last about ten o'clock we left her and pulled up the rest of the way to Peterborough again about half an hour too late for the bonfires and illuminations with which that ancient city celebrated our victory

There was astonishingly little fighting considering the number of wild Irishmen we brought down, but they were altogether too strong for the Yankees, who after giving their votes generally mounted their horses and made off so for want of better game our Patlanders occasionally got up a snug fight amongst themselves but though there were three or four *kilt* I did not hear of any very serious damage.

The Constitutionalists throughout the country have gained a glorious victory Mackenzie is turned out which we had hardly expected Perry having no chance on his own interest was taken up by Bidwell, who hitherto has always been able to bring in with himself a member for Lennox and Addington, but the loyal party turned them both out, and there is now only one Radical of influence in the House. The House consists of sixty three members and of the majority who threw out the supplies only thirteen have been re-elected and only seventeen Radicals in all. I should be almost afraid that the Tories will be too strong and get back to some of their old tricks now that like the bull in the china shop they have it all their own way; but the people will watch them closely, and I have great confidence in the determination of Sir Francis Head to redress all grievances, which I don't think now are many. I have sent you by Tom Macredie a copy of the report of the Committee upon the subject of the Executive Council, the subject on which he split with the House, and as they touch upon most of their favourite topics in it, it will put you somewhat *au fait* as to our politics. But remember that it is only a party report and do not make up your mind till you have heard—*alteram partem.*

In my last I spoke of the money bills, as if the House had refused to appropriate money for them;* before I closed my letter I perceived my mistake but forgot to correct myself. The money bills passed both Houses, but Sir Francis suspended his assent upon the supplies being stopped, and thus the Radicals have tried to throw the blame of the Act upon him; but he made known to the House that if the supplies were refused he would withhold the royal assent from all the other bills, and thus they acted with their eyes open. With whom the fault lies signifies not much, for the thing itself is not of much consequence except a temporary inconvenience, though I have no doubt it had an astonishing effect upon the elections.

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* See p. 160.

After spending Sunday in Peterborough we returned up the lakes getting some extra men to help in carrying out the Calypso. Having seen everything going right at home and contracted for building a barn and logging up about ten to fifteen acres I took advantage of the only spare time there will be until winter, to go down with Wallis to Kingston where we each of us purchased a boat at the sale of the naval stores. His is a large jolly boat pierced for eight oars but principally intended for sailing quite new, which must have cost at least £90 knocked down at £9 5/-, and mine a four-oared man of war's gig which would cost originally as much—price £8 10/

From Kingston I took the steamer to this place and wrote my letter up to the last page after which I sallied out to pay my instalments at the Government offices, but on my road I learned that Sir Francis had made a general clearance and amongst the rest Peter Robinson, the Commissioner of Crown Lands,* had that morning been displaced.

As it was useless of course to introduce my business to a man who had only been a few hours in office I took the opportunity of going across to Niagara where I spent three or four days with Sawbridge.†

This morning I have called on Sir Francis Head who is a very agreeable little man but in one respect inferior to his predecessor Sir John—he never asked me to dinner

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* See note p. 169.

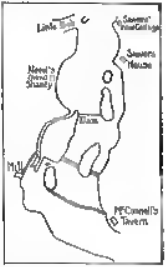
† An English acquaintance.

I have at last put my U. E. rights into a fair train, which have given me a good deal of annoyance, but I am afraid I may yet have a journey down to Kingston after harvest to get one of the transfer deeds. I shall have to wait here two or three days more for McDonell, without whom I cannot get my other deeds out.

TO HIS FATHER

Blythe, Sept. 22, 1836.

As I might have very well foreseen, McDonell, for whom I was waiting in Toronto, never arrived, and consequently I left with only half my business finished and arrived in Peterborough the next day. The next day was spent in that delightful pastime, which I had thought I was no more to indulge in, namely wading up the rapids, but I have partaken of that amusement this year to my heart's content.



The apology for a lock which the stupidity (if in some cases it be not worse) of the Commissioners has imposed upon us certainly facilitates the progress of small boats, at least in some states of the water, but for scows it is decidedly worse than it used to be.

Formerly we used to unload at McConnell's drag the scow up the shoot, load again, and by dint of rowing poling warping, wading and lifting her over occasional obstacles with handspikes we got her up somehow But now the main channel is dammed and the side channel though up to the neck in most parts has a bar at the top which a loaded scow will not pass we have therefore to take the scow first in the lock and there unload her then take her back to McConnell's and, getting her first over the shoot, wade up to Sawers's house and then drop down again to the lock to load. Boats that can be lifted bodily out of the water we lift out at the lock and carry them over to the canal, but large boats must come up at (a) where it is very deep and a tremendous stream running and where I have generally had the satisfaction of going over head. Indeed wading is hardly the proper name for our operations for a short man like me generally contrives to get up to the neck if not over head at once. Upon the present occasion we were nearly all day and it was very cold weather but we managed to get all our three crafts over the rapids and then leaving the men to get on as best they could we, the aristocracy, pushed on to the Falls in the Calypso.

I was nearly four days at home or rather on the road between the Falls and Blythe, getting down lumber for my new barn, and on the fourth the barn was raised there being in all twenty nine of us a large party for my small accommodations How they slept I do not know I never went to bed at all for Mr Kirkpatrick was to give a grand party the following day to which the rest of them were gone down, and Dennistoun and Gawin, with two of Wallie's men who were to officiate as flute players, came down to Blythe in the evening in the Télémaque. We supped and sat up till we calculated we should have daylight for the rapids and then started on our journey; and though we were two good hours in the rapids, where we had once almost determined to leave the Télémaque to take her chance and find our way home as we could, we got to McConnell's before anybody was up. The morning being very cold we indulged ourselves, whilst the breakfast was preparing, in drying our clothes, sitting in our shirts till our trousers were dry, and then putting on them, whilst the former was before the fire, the wanting garment being replaced for the time by a blanket. I mention this more particularly as it is a method I have only lately discovered of drying myself when in a mixed company; and I am beginning to be more particular about wet clothes lately, if opportunity offers of drying them, on account of sundry rheumatic pains which generally succeed a bout at Bobcaygeon.

Starting after breakfast we reached Peterborough at eleven and consequently had plenty of time to refresh ourselves after our fatigues, call upon our friends, etc., until it was time to go to the ball which went off very well. The house being but small was reserved entirely for receiving rooms, card room and supper room, and a tastily arranged covered walk led through the garden to our old marquee, which having been our house on Constitution Island, now served as a ball room, gaily ornamented with boughs and garlands of flowers, and the grass was our floor. A very pleasant evening it proved and it lasted till four o'clock. Of course I was amongst the last to leave and the sun was up before I was in bed. Nevertheless I was up again before eight and all morning occupied in getting the Alice* up and safely lashed on to the wheels of a waggon which were separated to the necessary length by a temporary pole. This was a very tedious job, and before she was well off it was afternoon. I saw her part of the way to Mud Lake and then left her to go on with Need, Atthill and the flute players and I returned myself to take an oar in the Télémaque next morning when we were to conduct a party of ladies up to the Falls. I spent a very pleasant evening at the Hamiltons and about eleven was preparing for bed expecting not to start till late next morning when I found it was decided we should push on all the way to the Falls and consequently were to start at five a.m. I had nothing prepared and it was near one before I was in bed but next morning I was stirring soon after four, collecting our party. We breakfasted at Mud Lake and about eight o'clock the expedition sailed. The Télémaque with myself, Dennistoun, Gawin Hamilton and Tom Fortune as the crew, carried Dr. and Mrs. Barclay and Miss Fisher, the latter two sisters of Mrs. Kirkpatrick, and Mr. and Miss Stewart; the Calypso rowed by Wallis, Griffin and two Messrs. Kirkpatrick and a Mr. Foster. We got over the rapids without much difficulty and soon after dark reached the Falls. You may imagine I slept pretty well having had only about six hours sleep during the preceding three days and working pretty hard all the time.

The next day after prayers at home, I called on the ladies, dined at Dennistoun's and home that night. Monday came up to breakfast at the Falls in order to take the ladies up to Balsam Lake but the weather was so bad we could not get so far, but to make amends we had the flute players in after dinner and had a dance, the first thing of the kind, since creation, in these parts. I went home at night but returned before daylight for a hunt in which I was to have the honour of taking Miss Fisher* in my canoe. Our hunt was unsuccessful, but after losing the deer we all continued up to Balsam Lake, Miss Fisher being under the guidance of myself and Griffin and in celebration of such an honour my canoe by special permission was christened the Janet Fisher. This young lady you must know occupies so conspicuous a place here, not only because she is the first who has ever been so far back, but also because she is in herself a remarkably agreeable person and the best suited to the backwoods of any young lady I have seen in Canada. She is however too high game for such as me, I am afraid, having a very nice fortune of her own. Another pleasant evening succeeded and the next morning the party returned into the world again.

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* The boat bought at Kingston p. 172.

Only one event occurred in August viz., the death of the old Major. Gawin had already commenced to settle on his father's grant on Cameron Lake and Mrs Hamilton has determined to leave Peterborough and come to live with him.

Next in order of events is the receipt of your letter announcing the proposed grant of the Society to our church, which was of course a matter of rejoicing to us. With regard to this subject things do not proceed as smoothly as I had hoped. I wrote immediately upon the receipt of yours to the Bishop of Quebec and

to the Archdeacon of York,* neither of whom has honoured me with an answer. I wrote also to Lord Mt. Cashel, who is a proprietor in Fenelon, but [doubt] whether we shall get anything from his lordship. Secondly the Verulam gentlemen will not join us, so that the whole brunt of the thing will fall on Dennistoun, Wallis and myself, for I have no confidence whatever in Jameson doing anything. Capt. Dobbs, who is at last arrived amongst us, may perhaps do something. We are also applying amongst our friends in Toronto but I fear we cannot reckon upon much from them. Thirdly, Wallis had forgotten what was distinctly understood at the time though unfortunately only in conversation, viz. that all we could collect should go to provide a permanent salary, and he wanted to apply some of it towards the building and clearing. I have had a hard battle upon this subject and at last it is thus settled. No money whatever is to be laid out on the church, all the expenses of that must fall upon Jameson and Wallis in whose village it is; no money whatever is to be laid out on the clearing, and Jameson and Wallis are to provide all the lumber for the house, and whatever work we cannot do ourselves and which must be paid for is to come out of the fund—this however will not reach £20 at the very most, but I fear we shall have hard work to get more than fifteen acres cleared. But the greatest difficulty is to get the land. I am afraid there will be difficulty in getting a grant of land from Government; last year it might have been done, but what resolution the present parliament may come to on the subject of Clergy Reserves. I don't know; we shall petition and I hope we shall get our grant, but if we do not there will be a considerable difficulty. Jameson and Wallis ought to give the land, as they own full 12,000 acres, being more than a tenth of the two townships, but Jameson is a very impracticable man and Wallis does not like to promise; I have however a promise from Wallis, that if the land we can procure is not convenient to the Falls he will give a town lot (half an acre) upon which we will build the house, and if we get no grant, he will give two lots. I will give one hundred acres if we cannot get a grant and I think I can promise in that case that by exchange or otherwise we can get two hundred acres at a tolerable distance, say a mile and a half or two miles off for a farm. As to the subscriptions we have very little information here upon the subject. Dennistoun and Wallis wrote under the impression that the money was to go to finishing the church, etc., and somewhere about £150 was collected, not including an offer of £50 from Mrs Dennistoun which was declined as being too much. Now that the object of the subscription is finally decided and the proposal of the Society known they have written again with a copy of the Society's letter and all subscriptions are to be paid to Messrs. B. Heywood & Co.,* as collected. You will therefore know the result as soon as we do.

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*Daughter of Judge Fisher of Lennox Co. and sister of Mrs. Stafford Kirkpatrick. She married Mr. Wallis in 1840.

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* The bishop of Quebec continued to be so called after the original Province of Quebec was divided into the Provinces of Upper and Lower Canada, in 1791. His diocese still extended over both Provinces. He had two archdeacons in Upper Canada, the archdeacons of York and Kingston. It is the former, the Ven. John Strachan, who was concerned—and apparently unconcerned—in the matter of the Church for Fenelon.

Tell McAndrew, if I have no time to write to him to-day, that Need has set up a store at Bobcaygeon and serves things out himself from behind the counter

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* The private bank of Sir Benjamin Heywood, of which William Langton was manager

—this after all the aristocratic notions will amuse McAndrew *

To his Father

Peterborough, Jany 8 1837

Almost my last sentence was that Dennistoun amongst others was certain of remaining amongst us. Now it appears that on that very day Dennistoun had determined to leave us. I must acknowledge that the last Scotchman leaving us looked rather ominous and shook my reviving confidence in the country but I am happy to inform you that such an evil omen is not likely to take place. After some weeks hesitation and consultation with his brother in New York he has finally determined to remain where he is and is very actively preparing for extended operations. But besides this determination which is very agreeable to us individually I think the whole prospects of the country are materially improved. Notwithstanding all the abuse which the Spectator lavishes upon Sir Francis Head and the Tories, our Tory Parliament is doing its duty by the country and seems determined to press forward what is principally wanted—great public works. Without roads, canals and other similar improvements it is impossible the country can ever thrive, and this fact might have been taught them by our neighbours over the water. At last we have got a Parliament that seems inclined to do us justice in this respect, and if

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* In *Six Years in the Bush* Mr Need says "In consequence of so large an influx of settlers in the Autumn, I had thought it prudent to lay in a considerable store of flour and pork, which proved extremely beneficial to my neighbours, and returned me a considerable profit. In this country a gentleman may if he chooses keep an open shop or store without derogation, and it is no uncommon thing to see a man of education and acquirement standing behind a counter"

the Legislative Council does not follow the example of the Lords at home the country next summer will be all alive with important public improvements. There is some consolation for us even if they do put an extinguisher on the bills of the lower house, in the certainty that in this country, where the abuse is not hallowed by antiquity, there will be very little trouble in getting rid of the nuisance. To the grant of £16,000 of last year, which was reserved, the royal assent is passed, and next summer the works at Bobcaygeon, Purdy's, and Peterborough will commence. £50,000 has been granted by the lower house for the Trent but has not yet passed the upper, and £500,000 for roads is in progress if it has not already passed the lower house. This however, which was principally intended to form one grand road through the Province from end to end, is not expected to pass and might perhaps embarrass our finances too much; but it is expected that instead of it, £75,000 will be granted to be divided amongst the districts for the making and improving of inner roads.

Amongst numerous public and private bills which are in progress those that affect us most are for the improvement of Windsor harbour and one for a macadamized road from thence to Scugog Lake. If these are passed we shall be almost independent of the Trent when the locks at Purdy's are complete.

But though all this is very satisfactory it does not afford me so much gratification as another fact, which though not so obvious, is becoming daily more evident. The farmers, who for years have been entangled in the meshes of the storekeepers, are clearly getting out of their books and becoming independent, and the extraordinary price of all produce this year will I hope complete their emancipation. This looks well and will be a permanent advantage to the country and even to the storekeepers in the end.

I must now speak of the church. I wrote to the Bishop of Quebec and the Archdeacon of York upon the subject and requested them to allow themselves to be named trustees. The former being in England the Bishop of Montreal answered me in a very cool strain and the latter is too much engaged in politics* to think of such trifles and consequently left me without reply. At last I got a second letter from the Bishop not much more satisfactory and evidently misunderstanding or forgetting what I had formerly said. Upon this I applied to our parson here, Mr D'Olier (at Peterborough), and making him one of the trustees have left him to correspond with the Bishop. In the meantime it is useless to leave the money doing nothing in England especially as the Scotch subscriptions have been remitted to New York and you may tell William that in the course of a week or two we shall draw upon Heywoods for £150.

My own operations may be very succinctly given. The lakes closed almost immediately after my last, but opened again for a day or two and were long impassable. During this time I was principally engaged working on the roads until the middle of December. On Christmas Day all the neighbourhood dined with me, then with Gawin Hamilton; Tuesday with Wallis, Wednesday at Dennistoun's, Thursday at Blythe, Friday with Mr Haig (at McAndrew's old place), Saturday at Dennistoun's, Sunday Jan. 1st, with Wallis where we had the backwoods delicacy of beaver tails. On Monday we went down to Bobcaygeon to elect Township officers and dine with Need, and on Tuesday came down here.

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* He was a member of the Executive Council. (See p. xxvii.)

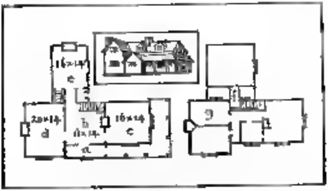
To his Father

Blythe, Feb. 11th, 1837

The last year's grant of £16,000 for our waters, which was reserved for the Royal assent, has been passed, and an Act to amend part of it with an extra £1,000 is in progress; a grant for £70,000 for the Trent has passed the lower house and has been read twice in the upper; the question of the Clergy Reserves seems likely to be at last settled by giving to the English, Scotch, and Roman Catholic churches and some dissenting congregations shares of the fund in proportion to the members of the different sects; the back townships of our district will probably this session be formed into a new district to be called Colborne, with Peterborough as the capital. Farm produce, especially wheat and rye, is enormously high, wheat being sold in the front currently at 8/- and 8/6 where last year 4/ was considered a great price. This is a great thing for farmers who have much to sell, but they are few and I fear it may have a very disadvantageous effect upon the country, as no contractors can be found to undertake the works contemplated next summer whilst provisions are at such a ruinous price. I unfortunately shall not have more than one hundred bushels to sell, but that as far as it goes will yield a handsome profit.

I will answer all your questions and suggestions with regard to the steps which should be taken if you come out. The plan which I have at present in contemplation for the house is the same which I once shewed you when last at home, which I will here append for your guidance.

Ground floor. From the verandah you will enter into a porch and thence into the hall or whatever you call it. The porch will prevent much cold coming in with you but as it appears to me that there is no way of keeping a house warm half so effectually as keeping the passages upstairs warm I have made this ante-



room tolerably large with a view of having a stove in it communicating with the chimney of the room c perhaps a Russian stove, of which more anon. From b you go to the right into the dining room and to the left into the drawing room, b being lighted by a window over the stairs. I then would build the kitchen e, a separate house altogether, and join it to the other house by frame work, the intervening space being entered under the stairs: on the right you have the back door and on the left steps going down into the cellars: before you is the door into the kitchen. A back kitchen might be added beyond, and perhaps it would be adviseable in building the chimney to have a fireplace on both sides put up even if the back kitchen were not immediately built. This kitchen being a foot lower than the other rooms, when you go upstairs you can get into the upper storey of that part at f and

[illegible] at the Present Time

afterwards rise two steps more to the landing, out of which go two bed rooms of 14 x 9½ each and a dressing room of 7½ foot square for you and thence into your bedroom. It may strike you that the window of the back room, *g* looks not into the light of day but into the kitchen part of the building but as that building is lower than the main one and as the ridge of the roof comes somewhat to the right of the window there will be room enough. Now when I have told you that the height of the rooms is nine feet from floor to floor or eight and a half to the beams you will have all the dimensions of the house. I ought to add that the upper storey is only a half storey the walls being only four feet high, but as the roof has a great pitch a ceiling may be carried across at eight feet from the floor and thus but a small portion of the roof will be left exposed to admit heat or cold. I should also mention that the three windows in the sitting rooms will be more than four feet broad the three on the gables upstairs more than three feet and the two dormer windows in the front about three feet the exact dimensions depending upon the kind of glass which is most convenient to get.

I am aware of many inconveniences attending this kind of house, but all things taken into account and paying some regard to outward appearances I can think of no better. The question must first be decided between log frame and stone: the latter is too expensive and the frame houses, though hardly more expensive than a good log house, are miserable shells which can never be kept warm. I therefore decided for a good log house, raised on a stone foundation to protect the lower logs and the logs to be hewn square and bedded in mortar. It may afterwards be plastered or papered inside and painted or roughcast outside. Something outside should be done to protect the timber, and the unsightliness of the rough logs inside might hereafter be obviated the cheapest by papering—not on the logs but on canvas—though a coat of plaster would be a more effectual safeguard against vermin.

The question being decided in favour of a log house the first objection arises that you cannot safely build a log house of two full stories even if you curtail beyond what is desirable the height of your rooms. You must therefore either build as I propose or be altogether on the ground floor. (And here I must observe that I have never felt that being immediately under the roof renders such upper rooms disagreeably hot or cold if you lath and plaster over the rafters.) To the latter plan there are several objections, viz., you must have double the quantity of roofing, which besides the expense opens a double surface to the attacks of rain and snow; you must have a greater number of chimneys which besides the expense exposes you more to fire; thirdly, it is difficult to plan such a house without losing much room in passages, etc., and at best it would be a rambling concern; and fourthly, logs beyond a certain length are very unwieldy and troublesome things to manage and some at least on every side must go the whole length to bind the work well together. This last objection leads me to notice your sketch of a large square double house. It is the simplest and, except for the size of the logs, would be undoubtedly the cheapest; but such a house is difficult to plan without some loss of room in the central part, and at any rate the kitchen must be turned out of doors altogether. It has also another objection, the roof cannot have sufficient pitch, to throw off the wet and snow well, without becoming a very cumbersome affair, and consequently the upper rooms cannot be so lofty as when a narrow house allows you to have a high pitch. However I believe it might be a cheaper house and, from having fewer outside walls, a warmer one, and I will reconsider the matter. The angles in the roof which my house presents and it does not may be another objection; they certainly constitute the chief extra expense, but I have never found them to leak in such houses as I have seen. My outside chimney is also an objection which I do not well see how I can obviate. A Russian stove is a thing I have all along thought of building, but it is such a large affair that I have been somewhat puzzled where to put it. I don't think any of us would like to be deprived of a fireplace in the sitting rooms, but perhaps a stove between the dining room and hall might replace the fire in the former, or the hall might be made a little larger and thus a stove might be introduced into it.

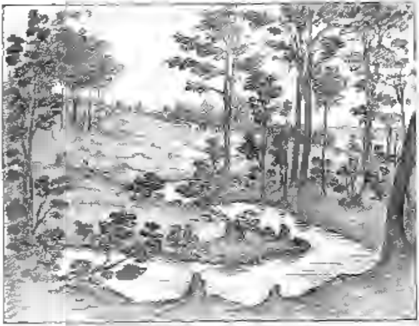
With regard to the cooking stove which you mention, I would certainly oppose such a thing coming from England; there are plenty of cooking stoves of Yankee construction to be bought here with all the coppers, etc. for £10 or £12, and a great convenience they are, though they can never entirely supersede a fireplace in a kitchen. Some I have seen sent out from England are by no means so complete and being intended for coal are very difficult to heat with wood.

I have been thus particular with my description of the house, not only because it will give you an idea what furniture to send out, but because, though if you do come it is unlikely I could wait for an answer to this before commencing operations, yet something

might occur to delay you and leave me time to profit by your remarks and observations.

My mother recommends me not to stint the house of room, but for the reason above stated with regard to log houses they cannot be made very large and large rooms though pleasant in summer are difficult to heat in winter; perhaps the rooms might be a little extended by making them sixteen instead of fourteen feet wide and then the room on the right might be curtailed in length to fourteen feet, the extra room being given to the entrance hall, which would then afford more room for a stove.

With regard to your stock of wine, though whiskey is the constant beverage of the male sex in this country, yet for ladies and invalids and occasional festivals a little wine is necessary and of course your best way would be to exchange your stock for wine in bond. But I would make this suggestion, that port is a wine which if once touched with frost is spoiled for ever and who shall ensure it against such risk in this country; indeed I never tasted a good glass of port here yet. Sherry and madeira on the contrary are uninjured by frost even if frozen quite solid and are said rather to be improved by it, as they are by heat, so that it is a common thing to put a pipe of madeira in the garret, I hear, where it may be mellowed by the extremes of heat and cold. Another thing I would recommend, that it should come out in the wood with an outside casing to resist depredation, and not in bottle. My wine is arrived but as it is still in Wallis's cellar at the Falls I know nothing of its safety, though a certain jingling in one of the cases makes me rather fear for the contents.



View of Blythe, after Addition in 1841

From a sketch by Anna Langdon

Now as a suggestion in case of any more parcels or of your coming out. The Bibles and prayer books you sent out are all gone and numerous applications for more—the Bibles especially, but the testaments do not please. Some Bibles of a cheaper description and a few like the last for old eyes and a few more prayer books would be acceptable. Secondly, you know that I was once very full of the study of the controversy respecting the seniority of Latin and Italian. I have collected a whole volume full of facts bearing upon that subject, which have led me to a very different conclusion from yours and the Italians, but I have never met with though often sought for any book with a regular argument on the other side. My hours of classical study are now few and far between, but I have still a hankering after the old hobby, and chancing a month or two ago to see an advertisement of a book purporting to be what I wanted, I wrote down the title and if it is not too dear should like to get it. it is this: *Raynouard—Influence de la langue romane rustique sur les langues de l'Europe latine* 8vo.

As to the church you may rest easy that I will not make myself the laughing stock of the others as you say by doing more than I am called upon to do. I never mentioned to any one what I said about the one hundred acres to you, but even with a view to increasing the value of my own property I could not dispose of one hundred acres more advantageously. Jameson and Wallis should certainly do the most of any as they will be the principal pecuniary gainers, but Jameson is a mule that will neither be led or driven and I never expect one farthing from him or his friends. Wallis is anxious enough about it, but he has already had so much thrown upon his shoulders by Jameson that he is loath to do anything more than he is obliged to do. Still I have him now distinctly tied down to my previous proposals with the exception of the land and I have no doubt of getting that too from him when we see an actual prospect of a clergyman. I said in my last letter that we should soon draw for our funds as the exchange was so high, and we should have done so had I not missed Wallis before he went to New York. I intended to take the occasion of drawing that money to state, that unless we could come to some settlement as to how the land was to be procured I would not allow the money to be called for. I have tried to come to a coalition of funds with Atthill whose father being the Dean of Clogher might do much for us both in London and the north of Ireland, but he feels bound to Need, and nothing I feel convinced will be done by them. Need I tried upon the subject but got nothing but vague answers though I offered that the clergyman should live at whichever end of the lake raised the most subscriptions and should do duty at both alternately. The stumbling block appears to be that Need wanted to beautify his village with a church* which I insisted should run away with none of the funds. I still hope that we may carry the thing through this summer, sooner or later there is no doubt of it, but the great thing is to do it before the Society have time to cool. The new arrangement of the proceeds of the Clergy Reserves which is in its progress through parliament may do something for us, at any rate if it is successful it may get us a grant of land.

Feb 13th. As to the church we have £350 which at the present exchange is about £430 currency or more, and even at six per cent you may say £27 per annum but if we buy bank stock or other security will probably give more than £30. Besides we have no account yet of Wallis's Irish subscriptions and perhaps there may be some addition to his and Dennistoun's Scotch subscriptions; so that we shall I doubt not make up the £55 per annum I told the Bishop we expected to guarantee and which he only half reading or understanding my letter wrote to the Society that we had guaranteed. Judging from his letters he is a very slovenly lazy personage. I have consented that some small subscriptions we expect here should go to the building of the parsonage and church.

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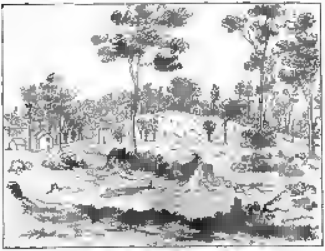
* See note p. 166.

To his Brother

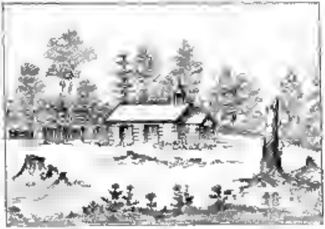
Blythe, March 10th, 1837

Our church affairs look much more flourishing. I have drawn on B. Heywood & Co. for £200 sterling for which we shall get ten or eleven per cent., making £245. Wallis has a similar amount and letters from Jameson's friends promise from £100 to £150 sterling more, making in all between £600 and £700 currency. For £200 of this we get eight per cent. from the Peterborough church and probably shall get as much for the rest on the best security. What we have lent out is only for one year, as we intend to invest in bank stock. I think we may fairly calculate upon £50 currency per annum, which with the Society's grant will be sufficient. Besides which, Atthill, seeing no chance at the other end of the lake of anything being done, has promised to join us, and as his father is a dignitary of the church we may get some handsome aid from that way. A Rev. Mr. Wade, a Church missionary, has been making his rounds and fell ill at Atthill's where he was detained some weeks He has taken a fancy to the place and wishes to get the appointment having some independent fortune he is in treaty for the purchase of a farm for his son on the lake a fine lad now at the College at Toronto. He has also applied to purchase two town lots at the Falls. I know little of him but he appears a very gentlemanly man of about forty five and his having a wife and family is a great recommendation. Atthill who knows something of his family and has seen more of him, speaks highly of him. When I last saw him he was too unwell to speak of business, but when he recovers Wallis and I mean to speak to him on the subject and request the Bishop to appoint him. Should we not be able to get land from the Government Wallis will give two town lots at the Falls whereon we will build a house for him or if he wants a better house than we intended we will do towards it as much as we intended. We have petitioned for a grant of land and shall probably get an answer in a fortnight. I stated in the petition our pledges to the Society and the subscribers and requested the government to enable us to fulfil them whether I shall succeed I doubt, for the Clergy Reserves question still remains unsettled, and the Scotch are making a great stir about former endowments. As Mr Wade wishes to reside in the village and will have a farm of his own independently it will be of less consequence, if he gets the appointment.

Parliament is prorogued and we now know the results of the session They certainly have been very Tory altogether there is no fear of any alterations in the constitution from them and the most important question of all, the Clergy Reserve question, they have left as they found it. This has been almost the only



The Church Hill at Fenelon Falls



The Church at Fenelon Falls

From sketches by Anne Langton

question upon which any main principle has been discussed; there has been discussion however enough in all conscience, but its only object has been to decide who should get the greatest share of the public money. The old Parliament did nothing in the shape of improving the country, the present one I fear has been doing too much. To every public work which was proposed they have granted a charter and advanced money till towards the close of the session it began to be a question whether half the money could be raised; and consequently to meet this difficulty clauses were introduced into all the money bills, at the eleventh hour, suspending operations until the governor in council should authorize the works to commence. I cannot say I like this, it gives too much power to a person[1] wholly irresponsible to the parties granting and paying the money. We for instance have got £77,000 for the Trent, subject to the above condition; suppose only half the whole sums granted can be raised, what is to hinder Sir Francis from stopping our work altogether and laying out all the sum granted on the Hamilton railway or some other work. We shall have however £16,000 spent on our lake and at Peterborough without any such clog, and we have been formed into a new District, called Colborne, of which Peterborough is the capital. These are the two measures which principally affect us.

I accuse our Parliament of granting too much money, but they fall into the shade alongside the new State of Michigan. Michigan was made a state this winter and they forthwith incurred a debt of $5,000,000 to commence constructing three great railroads from one end of the State to the other. This system of going ahead seems to have answered in the States

but I doubt whether there is sufficient spirit amongst us to carry the system through.

To his Father

Blythe, 7th May, 1837

In reply to your letter of the 15th February I would have written sooner (though I have not much answer to make) had the climate permitted but we seem getting worse every year here in that respect. In the spring of '34 the ice left us on the 12th April and it has since put off its departure to the 26th April and 5th May and 6th May in the following years. This is getting very near midsummer, and at this rate it will soon reach it. I have nothing further to communicate than this, that in consequence of the lateness of the season you must delay your departure from England a little.

I have made a contract for putting up the house, after a great deal of difficulty and uncertainty about getting anybody to undertake it, but no commencement has yet been made and I cannot promise that the house will be ready to receive you till the end of August. We cannot here command hands to any extent, and the difficulty of getting provisions this year is an extra obstacle. In the course of a few days I now expect to make a commencement, but you had better not be in too great a hurry for it would be very unpleasant if you were to arrive before there was a roof to shelter you.

Did I tell you too that I had written to the Bishop to request him to appoint Mr Wade to our church but answering letters does not seem his Lordship's forte. He must have received this last letter for I paid the postage, thinking that had been the obstacle to former letters. I certainly did not tell you that the Government have refused to grant us any land. I do not think it is worth while to trouble Lord Glenelg about it. Our only ground of application would be this—that at the time of my visit to England glebes were always assigned to churches by Government, and that upon the strength of that we bound ourselves to the Society to clear and build upon the glebe. Upon my return when we wished to fulfil our engagements we could get no land to clear and build upon. I will have a cabinet council upon the subject with my colleagues and if we think a memorial desirable it will accompany this letter.

EXTRACTS FROM LETTERS OF THE TRANSITION PERIOD

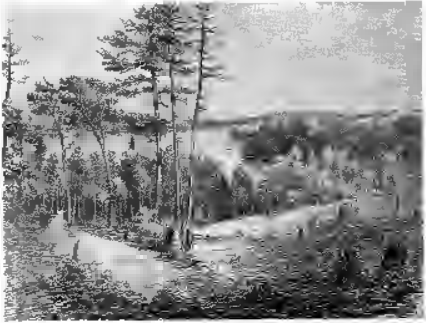
EXTRACTS FROM OCCASIONAL LETTERS AFTER 1837

[The series of early letters closed in 1837 with the arrival of his chief correspondent, his father, in Canada. Letters after this are addressed to his brother in England, who copied portions of the correspondence concerned with the transition stage of life in the back lakes. Such of these portions as seem to have permanent interest form the contents of this division of the letters.]

How to Add to Farming Some Other Means of Making Money

Oct. 21, 1844

The complaints are universal of the difficulty of making a living by farming, and I feel no doubt, after giving it a fair trial, that in the present state of affairs it is not to be done. Still I cannot bring myself to think of giving up the farm, for the chances will certainly improve every year and in time even farming alone will probably become more profitable. Were there any other means of making a little money to help the farm, the kind of life is one which I should prefer to any other; and though agriculture alone is a poor prospect, you may live better on a small sum on a farm than anywhere else. The question is what other means of money making there are, and it is a question which I have asked myself and others five hundred times without getting any satisfactory answer. Ways of making money there doubtless are, but almost any I can think of involve the necessity of moving to a more civilized neighbourhood and it is exactly this which I want to avoid. A steamboat would have the advantage of improving the country more perhaps than anything, but the chances of profit are not very encouraging and the risk and capital to be expended are great. At present the thing is out of the question because the public works from want of funds are at a standstill and it will be probably two years before the whole line will be opened. A distillery on my own creek in connection with the farm, and a store principally intended to buy grain for the distillery would I believe produce enough, but there are objections even in the way of this. My mother is most decidedly and strongly opposed to it on the score of morality, as she thinks a facility of procuring whiskey would be an injury to the country. Besides this a bill has been introduced into our House of Assembly for imposing an excise of sixpence per gallon on whiskey (about thirty per cent. on its value), which will have the effect of throwing the business into large establishments. This I conceive would be the case even in a cash country like England, but in a country like this, where it is always difficult to obtain cash for any article whilst the tax would have to be paid in money, I think it would have the effect of entirely knocking small distilleries on the head. [A distillery] would very well dovetail into a farm for, besides consuming the surplus grain, the feeding of pork and beef is one of the main profits of a distillery and the farm might be principally devoted to rearing stock. The store would certainly pay and that permanently, but it requires there to be something else to bring customers to a store. Those who brought their grain to the



View from Blythe Looking Towards Fenelon Falls

A pen and ink drawing by Anne Langton

"Moving to a more civilized neighbourhood is exactly [what] I want to avoid."

distillery would lay out the proceeds at the store but if the former were given up they would take their grain and with it their custom elsewhere, and leave for the unsupported store only the custom of those who had no grain to sell. I think I have before said to you that I know of no money making business in Canada except the Law, storekeeping, tavern-keeping and perhaps I may add horse-dealing. The two latter we will altogether omit. Storekeeping is decidedly the most money making and is carried on with very little capital, but it appears to me that those who make it pay are invariably those who have started with next to nothing and have gradually crept up in the world, increasing their business as their capital, custom and experience increased. I hardly recollect an instance of any who have succeeded in planting a full grown tree.

LUMBERING

April 1st [1849]

The more I see and learn of the lumber trade the more I like its prospects. As the lumber is consumed nearer market it must be sought for further and further back, and we on the spot have many advantages. This year's spec will be a feeler. I entertain no doubt at all of its paying handsomely, though it is in a very small way, but enables us to gain experience cheap. If we see a prospect of its really turning out a business worth while following we shall be better able to extend it another year. There is a limit below which it will hardly be profitable to lumber, as it requires as many hands, ropes, anchors, etc. to take a small raft down as a large one almost, but on the other hand those who take more than one good raft down lose the advantage of personal supervision and the extent of the stuff in one stream delays them where time is the great object. *In medio tutissimus* is the rule here, and the middle course appears always safe. The great source of failure among lumberers is their sinking their capital in securing a field to work on, often long before they use it, and otherwise extending their business so much beyond their means as [to] have to get advances from the Montreal and Quebec men, who thus get all the profit. This is the Scylla which Nicholls is always cautioning me against; better far, if your means fail, sell your raft half way than get advances to take it on. One disadvantage we labour under here. We are so far from market that we must hurry, often at great additional expense, to get down at all in one season and then arrive late. Now the early rafts generally fetch so much more than the late ones, as they can be stripped the same season, that this is matter of great importance. Nicholls' advice is not to attempt it, but only to go at your ease as far as you can the first spring and then lay up, when you can be early in the market the next year. I think the advice is sound, as a season has to be lost somewhere in all probability and it is better to lose it before all the expense of transit has been incurred than after. This year, however, we shall push through at all events as it is of importance to us not only to get a return for our outlay but also to gain a general knowledge of the whole route and of many details of the business which can only be learned experimentally. I think in a former letter I estimated we should have 200 spars and that the cost of going to Quebec might be divided into three equal shares of £1 per stick each, the first when on the lake, the second at Peterborough and the third from

Peterborough to Quebec; the middle portion being the most risky and uncertain. Now this year we began too late and began at a wrong place first, so that the winter broke up whilst we had still twenty spars made in the wood and thirty more to make which but for that mistake we should have on the lake now. However we have upwards of 180 out and at a cost of not 15/- each. As to the next stage we were offered a contract to take them down at £1, so that £3 we may safely say they will not exceed; and of that nearly £1, consisting of wages of raftsmen, lockage, towage, etc., are not payable, by the custom of the trade, till the raft reaches its destination. I feel little doubt that we shall make 100 per cent. of it or nearly it.

Peterborough, 23rd May, 1849

Your assistance comes very seasonably, for the burden of the adventure is likely to fall upon me. My two companions in the business are as opposite as light and darkness. Boyd* is an Irishman whose blood got an extra boiling by being born in India, and all the Flemish blood of the Dunsfords has been concentrated in Jim.† You might as well yoke a wild horse with an exceedingly sedate ox as get these two to pull together

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* See note p. 182.

† James Wicks Dunsford, eldest son of the Rev. James Hartley Dunsford who brought his family to Canada in 1837. His second son Hartley and Mr. George Rik, his coachman, afterwards well known in lumbering circles, arrived a year earlier to build a house which was appropriately called *The Beehive*, large enough to contain Mr. Dunsford's numerous family. The family in time moved to Peterborough where Mr. Dunsford became editor of The Peterborough Gazette and published in it a readable historical novel called *The State Messengers*. Mr. James Dunsford remained to farm The Beehive land, but when Sturgeon Lake was abandoned by his neighbours he too gave up farming and took up the practice of law for which he had become qualified before leaving England. He was for sixteen years a member of the District and County Councils and from 1861 represented the County of Victoria in the old parliament of Canada.

For this reason Jem has all along held back and now may be said to have no share in the business, but if another year he can have the entire superintendance of some branch of the business where his gravity will not be decomposed by the vivacity of the other, he still wants to join us, and as a staid ox is sometimes a very valuable animal, I think such a department may be found. As for Boyd he is admirably adapted in many respects for the work he is at. When a raft is once started almost every thing must yield to despatch, and a restless being who can keep himself and every thing that comes in contact with him in a state of excitement for two or three months at a time is just the man to drive a river. He may want a curb at other times but there you may give him the reins. The worst is that his expected remittance has not yet arrived though I have in my pocket a letter which I think contains it. At all events things must be kept going, and I am not at all sorry to have more than my share of the speculation as long as I have the means to do it. There are not many pursuits in which ups and downs succeed each other more rapidly than in running a raft. The detention of our raft in the ice for a fortnight, when every other place was open, with expenses running on at the rate of £2 a day was very trying to the patience, and I was not at all sorry that Boyd was attending his wife at the time. At our first rapid at Bobcaygeon, which Boyd got through last year in a day, everything went wrong and we were a week. Just below we were detained three days by a head wind, and I understand Boyd was quite unapproachable. Then the good qualities began to operate, for in spite of head wind and horrible weather, with the whole raft a sheet of ice, he kept all hands at work for two days and nights and when the rest gave in he stuck at it with only two others and got to Buckhorn rapids which had he not reached that night there would have been another week's delay. Now came a turn of good luck to compensate for our unpropitious commencement. Last year he was three weeks at Buckhorn and left sixteen spars behind—this year we got through in a day and a half and got all his sixteen spars into the bargain. The next place is Burleigh rapids which I have never seen in high water, but how a raft ever gets through there is a mystery to me. I do not know any particular time they left Buckhorn but there was a report here to-day that he had got through. After Burleigh comes the river above this place, nine miles of consecutive rapids. The process is to break up the raft and commit the spars to the stream. About an hour after that perhaps two or three sticks reach Peterborough, the rest are left sticking here and there on rocks, dams and islands. The men follow them down clearing everything before them which is called driving. Each stick they release of course is soon brought up by some other lower down and as you advance the jams, as they are called, of course get worse and worse. The method of proceeding in each case requires great judgment. Sometimes you fix a windlass or have horses on shore, sometimes the men go on to the jam and loosen the sticks with handspikes, and sometimes you have to sacrifice a spar by chopping it. Occasionally you have to take off each stick singly as you would pick out spillikins at other times a little judicious prying and shaking the holding stick will loosen twenty or thirty. You may imagine what ticklish work it is to be standing upon a jam, or up to your middle in the water alongside of one, when it begins to give way. I have seen a piece of timber perhaps sixty or seventy feet long forced almost clear out of water. It is a hard and dangerous life, but they are a lighthearted set of dare-devils and the greatest rascals and thieves withal that ever a peaceable country was tormented with. Hen roosts have quite disappeared from the river side, and lambs and little pigs have to be kept under lock and key. This year the river has been very easy to run and I hope in spite of our detention, the expense will not exceed my original estimate.

June 18th, 1849

Our timber after all sorts of ups and downs, sometimes getting easily through bad places and being awfully detained at easy ones, has got to Peterborough at last, with the loss of only four sticks left behind and available for next year and one spoiled. As an illustration of the uncertain freaks of the Goddess that presides over lumber I may mention that we had two bad sticks, a crooked one and an unsound one, which we meant to leave behind, but like the bottle imp we never could get rid of them. The crooked one went over everything without touching and reached Peterborough where it lay exposed to public view, to our confusion and disgrace, one whole month before it was joined by its fellows. The unsound one formed the foundation of almost every jam in the river, and even after it was cut in two parts pertinaciously annoyed us all the way. My first estimate of the cost down to Peterborough was £2 or £2.5s per stick, but I do not think they have cost more than £1 10s or £1 15s at furthest. £1 more will certainly take them down to Quebec. What they will fetch there it is impossible to find out. Nobody will tell who knows, and very few know anything about that description of lumber. I know a raft last year of seventy, of which the twenty best sold for [illegible]; and we hear on good authority that the owner was offered £5. 10s for the rest this spring. Now we have very few as bad as his best, and I have had pointed out one or two of ours which they say are worth £20 or £25. This looks well but per contra I learned from the manager of one of the larger lumbering firms at Quebec that the annual demand is only for about 2,000 pieces and that their house is concerned in about 1,500; but he adds that there is always a demand for such sticks as some of ours which he saw, and I don't think he saw our best. We are working in a great measure in the dark, but Boyd will go on to Quebec. I think I shall try to run down there also when the raft has arrived, to try to learn something of our trade. Cummings, the manager above mentioned, told me that one of their foremen had reduced the value of a mast for them at least £50 by cutting it a few feet too short. When trifles make such important differences one ought to spare no pains to get information. There is a legal length to a certain thickness you must know and our men insisted that extra length beyond what was due to the girth was all thrown away. I however got them all cut as long as they would go and Boyd came after me and ordered them after they were drawn to be cut to the right length, but I stopped it after one was cut. Again after we had stuck half the day and nearly killed our oxen with one which I had laid out twenty five feet over the length I began to change my mind and directed them to be cut shorter for the future, but going down to Peterborough next day Boyd came and countermanded me so in the end almost all are over length which Cummings says may make a difference in their value of several hundred pounds—in some the extra length may be only an incumbrance, in other it may be worth 10/- or 15/- a foot.

As soon as the flies are not quite so bad, and some at least of my month's occupations are chalked off, I mean to go out lumber hunting. I hope we shall have capital for a larger spec. next year. I think we now know of the materials for a raft as large as this year's near home, but the place I am going to look at will be a two years' business and we have our eye on a third place, if we are not forestalled, which would keep us busy for some time.

I can see the rock, which Nicholls is always warning me of, on which most lumberers split, viz., the consuming of their capital in purchasing land and the right to lumber for future operations, to keep others out of the field. It must be kept well in mind, but it is very tempting. I can see also how lumberers come to be such rascals generally. The men steal beans and their masters steal trees. I suspect it is as dangerous a rock as the other.

I believe it is a safe rule when you wish to put a case of conscience that the wish is answer enough. Query: Do you stick firmly to steal not at all or do you make any difference in the person stolen from? Would you allow of stealing from the Queen or make any difference between land she had taken possession of by surveying and unsurveyed land? Would you steal from concession lines which the Queen has given to the public but the timber on which the Council, on what authority I know not, have given to the roads, and would your being Warden of that Council make any difference? Would you (in case you should in any case allow of stealing from individuals) make any difference if an individual in question were your friend—

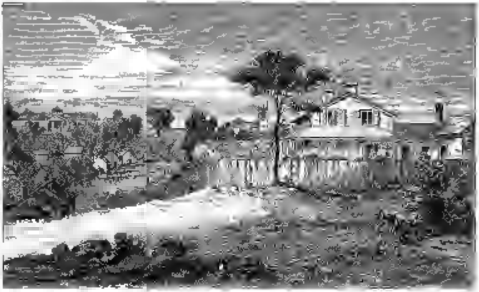
if you had offered to buy his timber or his land and he had refused—if you did not know and could not find out who owned the land? Or would you abolish the word steal and only take, remain probably in ignorance of any ownership but be willing to pay for what you take when the ownership is proved to your satisfaction? I believe ninety nine lumberers out of a hundred answer all these questions in their own favour and do many much more barefaced things.

Later than 15th June

The raft is now fairly at Peterborough which by its whiskey is as great an impediment to progress as the waters of any rapid. It is very trying to the patience, but it is not to be wondered at that the men after all their privations and hardships should get away as we call it here on the spree. This being a point in the journey where the kind of navigation changes we pay off some of our hands At the mouth of the Trent we pay off some more and then the only expenses are towage when required, as the government lockage and the pilotage are generally I believe always payable after the raft gets down It is well it is so for Boyd is unable to contribute anything in the way of cash. Any expenses below the mouth of the Trent James Dunsford has taken upon himself As long as our personal superintendence did not take us away from home we each did what we could with [out] counting days, but from Buckhorn downward Boyd is to be allowed $14 a month, the rate of an ordinary good hand, and he is the best we have He will go on to Quebec

The thermometer above ninety degrees—I was travelling all the time as much by night as by day and in every kind of conveyance.

LETTERS ABOUT
AUDITING THE
PUBLIC ACCOUNTS



The House in Peterborough, 1852-55

From a water colour drawing by Anne Langton

LETTERS OF 1855 AND 1856

FROM JOHN A. MACDONALD * TO JOHN LANGTON

Quebec, 5th February 1855

Confidential

MY DEAR LANGTON

I have had continually before my eyes our last conversation, and under the impression that you had finally made up your mind to retire from Parliament I spoke to Oliphant† and subsequently to Lord Bury‡ and Sir Edmund Head§ about your appointment to the office of Indian agent vice [*undecipherable*] dismissed. The salary is about £350. I may say I had secured the appointment for you when on my return Cayley** showed me your letter saying you had resolved to return to Quebec. I was glad to hear this as I think you worthy of a better office than settling the quarrels of demoralized Redmen with still more demoralized

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* The Hon. (afterwards Sir) John Alexander Macdonald (1815–1891) member of the Legislative Assembly for Kingston and attorney-general for Canada West.

† Laurence Oliphant (1829–1888), secretary to Lord Elgin. In 1854 he was appointed superintendent of Indian affairs and made a journey to Lake Superior which he described in a volume entitled *Minnesota and the Far West* (Edinburgh, 1855). He returned to England soon after Lord Elgin's retirement at the end of 1854.

‡ William Coutts Keppel Viscount Bury (1832–1894). He was superintendent of Indian affairs in Canada from 1854 to 1857.

§ Sir Edmund Walker Head, Bart (1805–1868) who succeeded Lord Elgin as governor-general of Canada on December 19, 1854. He remained in office until October 24, 1861.

** The Hon. William Cayley (1807–1890) member for Huron in the Legislative Assembly and inspector-general from 1845 to 1848 and from 1854 to 1858.

Whites. Another position now offers itself for which your habit of mind eminently qualifies you, and if you do not object I have no doubt that it will be at your service whenever you please.

It is very fortunate for Cayley that Mackenzie* has made such an opportune exposé of the way affairs have been conducted in the different public departments. He is now called upon, without an invidious prying into the affairs of the other departments, to institute a searching enquiry into the management and accounts of all the Bureaux. You know his office is that of "Inspector General of Accounts" and that the office originally was that of Auditor General. By degrees the Customs and financial business of the Province came under his jurisdiction, though not under his patent of office, and these have now become his sole business. His duties of auditor having in fact become obsolete, I suggested to Cayley the resumption of his old duties and the forming an audit department with a departmental head and suitable staff—the head to have the same position as Cary† the head of the financial branch or Bouchette‡ as head of the customs branch. The salary to be say £500. Cayley at once approved of the suggestion and we simultaneously said you were the man to command the ship. It is proposed to come down to the House with the plan to give the Audit Branch a permanent habitation and a name by virtue of an Act of Parliament fixing by statute its duties, salaries, etc. This will give it more weight in the country and over the officers of government who are public accountants, than if established by mere order in Council. This would [not] permit the office being established till the end of the session, which would I fancy be rather agreeable to your views than otherwise. There is a point worthy of every consideration in this matter, about which we can talk when we meet. Meanwhile think over it. Shall the audit officer be eligible for Parliament? If he is, and has in fact a seat, he becomes a political personage, and is subject to change on every change of government. Then, as far as you are concerned, I think would be no objection. Then a question arises whether a political officer's report would have the same weight as that of a non-political person. Cayley thinks not, I differ. Under the principles of responsibility some member of the Government must produce under his responsibility the reports of the Audit office. In fact the report must be that of the Inspector General and therefore must be political. It seems to me that it would be well to have the audit officer in Parliament ready to answer all questions and debate all matters relative to the public accounts,—just as in England the Secretary of the Treasury is always in Parliament acting as efficient aid to the Chancellor of the Exchequer. So much for this.

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* William Lyon Mackenzie (1795-1861), member of the Legislative Assembly for Haldimand from 1851 to 1858, and one of the principal spokesmen of the Clear Grit party.

† Joseph Cary, deputy minister of finance, 1842-1866.

‡ Robert Shore Milnes Bouchette (1805-1879), a former rebel of 1837 who became commissioner of customs in 1851.

You see we have made extensive changes in Lower Canada—and though not so complete as a bystander would wish, I can assure you that we went as far as was practicable. Morris* had resolved not to go to Toronto, and as some change ought to be made and must have been made *now* we thought it better to commence at once rather than have the thing partially done now and finished next summer Cauchon* brings strength and energy Lemieux† commands more votes among the Franco-Canadians than any other person in Lower Canada, and his appointment stops a mischievous re-agitation of the Seignorial Bill question He will not set the St Lawrence on fire but he is a shrewd common sense man, and understands human nature as his unlimited influence in the District of Quebec shows As we have pledged ourselves to spend no money without the previous sanction of Parliament and afterwards under Order in Council there can be no more *Piers*‡ and he can do no harm

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* Probably the Hon. William Morris (1786–1858), who had been receiver-general in the Draper administration from 1844 to 1846, and president of the council from 1846 to 1848. He retired from public life in 1853 and died in Montreal on June 29, 1858.

Cartier§ is active—too much so—and will do his work. The chief necessity for appointing him was that the large and important District of Montreal was altogether unrepresented in the Cabinet except by Drummond ** who has no property in Montreal and represents a township constituency

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* The Hon. Joseph Edouard Cauchon (1816-1885), member of the Legislative Assembly for Montmorency since 1844 In January 1855, he became commissioner of crown lands, in succession to the Hon. A N Morin. He resigned the office in 1857

† The Hon François Xavier Lemieux (1811 1864), member of the Legislative Assembly for Lévis from 1854 to 1861, chief commissioner of public works from January 1855 to 1857

‡ While waiting for a steamer, on the Long pier at Rivière du Loup, one day some fifteen years after the date of this letter, Sir John Macdonald, who was waiting too, told us that the pier had been the occasion of turning a government out of power —*W. A. L.*

§ The Hon (afterwards Sir) George Étienne Cartier (1814-1873), member of the Legislative Assembly for the county of Verchères 1848-1861 On January 26, 1855, he became provincial secretary in the MacNab-Taché ministry and on May 24, 1856 attorney-general for Canada East in the Taché-Macdonald ministry

** The Hon Lewis Thomas Drummond (1813-1882) member for Shefford in the Legislative Assembly and attorney-general for Canada East, 1851 1856. He resigned his office when the Taché-Macdonald ministry was formed in May 1856.

WILLIAM LANGTON

Were you not glad to see old Badgley* housed for life? We had a good deal of difficulty but were firm

Let me hear from you soon You will be down at the beginning of the session I hope.

Yours very faithfully
JOHN A. MACDONALD

John Langton, Esq
Peterborough.

FROM JOHN LANGTON TO HIS BROTHER WM LANGTON

Toronto, Dec 30th 1855

MY DEAR WILLIAM

Having been now more than a month installed in my office I must give you some account of it and of the prospects of work before me and of the probability of my getting on pretty comfortably First my relations with Cayley have been satisfactory enough. He has fulfilled his pledge of leaving me entirely to myself to do what I like though I have some little complaint to make about my freedom of choice in my assistants. I found three clerks there who had been more or less attached to the Audit branch of his office, none of them worth much but two are practicable enough One of them however I blame Cayley for saddling me with. He is a black sheep who has been transferred from one department to another and found quite impracticable in all—utterly useless and worse than useless Cayley knew this as well as I do and it was a mere excuse that they sent him to me with some books which he used to keep and which are now in my branch because in fact, though he ought to have kept them, they never could trust him to do it I have seriously remonstrated for he is in receipt of a higher salary than anybody in my office and is utterly useless to me. I have told Cayley that I have no objection to his drawing his salary and sitting there but I will not be responsible for finding him work as I cannot trust to the accuracy of anything he does. I think I shall get rid of him before long I have introduced three more clerks and mean to get two more. My chief clerk I have in my eye but have not yet selected and do not mean to do [so] till I get the work into something like order

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* The Hon. William Badgley (1801-1887), member for Missisquoi county in the Legislative Assembly He had been attorney general for Canada East in the Draper administration 1847–48, but he was not included in the MacNab-Morin government of 1854. In January, 1855 he was appointed a judge of the Superior Court of Lower Canada.

Then as to my colleagues in the Board of Audit—one I find a very easy-going man the chief Commissioner of Customs who keeps his own branch well audited and is not disposed to trouble himself with any other He will sit occasionally at the board but will clearly give me neither assistance nor trouble The other who has just been appointed deputy Inspector General has risen from book keeper and is nothing but a book-keeper still He seems however an honest fellow and really desirous that everything should be straight, and from long experience in the office has been very useful in putting me up to its ways. He evidently entertains a most deferential respect for me and will give me no trouble except with a few crotchets which he has. One is an old jealousy between the book keepers of the Inspector and Receiver General's[*] departments who never can get their books to agree though repre senting the same transactions, and each of course blames the other. Some years ago two sets of books exactly similar were opened for the two departments and it was intended they should be a check upon each other and that they ought exactly to correspond. I think this was a mistake, for the means of information of the two are different, and even if two book-keepers took the same day book as their basis I doubt whether they would produce from it similar books. The Receiver General receives and pays, but the accounts which show how the money comes to be received and why paid are kept in the Inspector General's office. A warrant comes down for counter signature to the Receiver General and this is his only means of knowing to which account it is to be placed, and if the warrant does not properly express that on the face of it, he is not to blame if he enters it to a different account to the Inspector General. Or a cross entry may be made properly enough by the Inspector General of the reason of which the Receiver General knows nothing. So with receipts. But it is not often that there is £800,000 discrepancy as in Glen Mills & Co.* account this year in the two offices, in which by the bye the Receiver General was right and the Inspector General wrong, arising out of an issue of debentures to the Grand Trunk R. R. or rather to Glen Mills & Co. to be held for the Province and paid to Grand Trunk R. R. on certain conditions. My friend Dickenson, late book keeper now deputy Inspector General, considers his books as the true standard and thinks the Receiver General should compare with them at stated intervals and make them agree, which would render them useless as independent records. The Receiver General book-keeper wants everything to be reported to him in detail, so as to be a duplicate Inspector General book keeper. I think both are wrong. The warrants and bank certificates, etc., should contain on the face of them sufficient information as to the account to which they are applicable—which now they do not, or only a pencil endorsation made by a clerk unconnected with the book keeper—and the Receiver General should not attempt too great a refinement in the subdivision of accounts of which he can know nothing. Though the items might differ the large heads of income and expenditure and the totals would then agree, and if there was a disagreement it would be not without its use in pointing out accounts which were not sufficiently defined and understood. Another of his weak points is that he wants our main attention to be turned to points which have attracted notice, so as to be ready to answer and defend the office when Parliament meets. I want to find out anything that is wrong though never heard of before and set right what is known. He wants to shew that the Inspector General's department is not to blame. He has also some pet ideas, not of a very enlarged kind, which he bothers me with sometimes, but altogether he is a decent fellow and is no impediment to me.

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[*] The Hon. (afterwards Sir) Etienne Pascal Taché (1795-1865) had been receiver-general since November, 1849. On May 23, 1848, he was appointed a life member of the Legislative Council, and on April 19 he was elected speaker of that body but he continued to act also as receiver-general.

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* Glyn Mills and Company who with Baring Brothers and Company had been in 1852 the London financial agents for the Province of Canada and bankers for the Grand Trunk Railway

I told you I had been at work for more than a month, but of the accounts of 1855 which ought to be audited and printed by the end of February I have as yet only succeeded in getting hold of minute fractions, so that I despair of ever getting through with them when they do come. Hitherto I have been principally engaged with arrears which may be postponed, and in correspondence to hurry on the rendering of sufficient accounts, and getting explanations as to the system of keeping the books in different departments. I have succeeded however, not without some opposition, in introducing a system for the future of quarterly instead of annual returns which will make work more smooth hereafter. This question of arrears is a ticklish one. I do not like to commit myself to going back to any fixed time with all accounts, but with some it will be very necessary; and in some of the departments I find a great disinclination to let me go back, which as you may imagine only makes me the more anxious to do so. But in the audit itself there are several difficulties which present themselves. As to payments—was the money paid? Of course a voucher should be produced to show it was—but was the work done or service rendered which the money is payable for? It is not often we get such an item as appeared in last year's Public Accounts, in a page immediately following a whole host of £1. 2. 3's and £5. 3. 6's, viz., "Benjamin Chaffey and others, for services on the St. Lawrence canals," fifty odd thousand pounds. A detail was asked for and sixty three items given, of which Benjamin Chaffey got one of about £6,000, and, amongst others, two convents in Montreal got between them £35,000 for land bought of them. But supposing we have the whole sixty three vouchers, were there not some explanations wanted about this purchase of land—how much, at what price, what wanted for, by whose orders? The information on such points is generally very vague and incomplete, and it is difficult to draw a line where to stop in requiring details. It is clear that I cannot measure whether Benjamin Chaffey did the number of yards of embankment he is paid for, or whether the powder bought for blasting was really delivered or, if delivered, used. I must stop at the certificate of some responsible servant of the public somewhere (I rarely find any however except for large sums where no details are given), and if I am so to stop, where am I to do so? As far [as] concerns any real check I question whether I gain anything more by keeping a clerk engaged all day in checking a pile of small tradesmen's bills consisting of dozens of items each of so many pounds of such a thing at so much a pound, all amounting to £100 or so, than by passing an item of £10,000 paid to a contractor for work done when I have neither his contract nor any means of knowing whether the work was really done. One fellow has a very original notion of a voucher—he sends me his own cheque on the bank payable to himself or bearer as a voucher for certain payments which I have no doubt he did make with the money he drew. The idea is too innocent to allow of the supposition of the man being a rogue. As far as I have gone as yet into the Board of Works accounts I find the most scrupulous detail in small things and the most suspicious vagueness in the larger items. I have not yet come to asking further explanations, and when I do so I am much puzzled to know how far to require details.

Then supposing a voucher produced that the money was paid and a certificate that the service was rendered, another question arises—was the expenditure authorised? The Act is silent upon this point. It is contended by some that the auditor should certify before payment that the payment is authorized, and this seems to be to a certain extent the practice in England by an officer of the Treasury, but that clearly is no duty of mine here. After payment however am I to say whether it is authorised? Cayley says yes if not authorized by Act or Order in Council (I know many such), but this will not be sufficient for others who will want to know whether Act or Order in Council. I think I shall distinguish, that is report, all payments on Order in Council alone, but this will be difficult unless I can get them to keep their appropriation book better than it has been done and get them to enter on the face of the warrant on account of what appropriation, or if not of what Order in Council, and furnish me with a list of all warrants—and even this will not do unless the Board of Works when they send for a warrant enter in their certificate, which they do not always do by any means, on account of what appropriation.

Then as to receipts, something in the shape of vouchers is often required and is more difficult to manage. Our Superintendent of Education* gets £3,000 a year to supply school libraries, and he sends me as vouchers of his outlay booksellers' receipts and tells me he has sold to schools some £2,000. Now how can I tell whether he has not received more, for as his accounts are not published we have not even that check upon him. I remember when I was Warden saving the county many hundred pounds by compelling the Treasurer to give receipts for land tax out of a cheque receipt book. He argued amongst other difficulties which he made, that that was no protection as he might enter a different sum in the cheque to what he did in the body. True enough, but that could hereafter be better brought home to him than if he had put the money in his pocket and made no record of it in his books. At any rate the land tax became more productive, and we have since had no more people's land sold by mistake for arrears of taxes which they had paid. I can think of no other way applicable to some of these cases except something similar, except in the case of land agents which I will mention presently. Perhaps the cases of this kind arise so seldom, most receipts being direct [from] the public chest except land agents, Customs collectors and collectors of tolls on the canals.

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* The Rev. Egerton Ryerson (1803-1882), superintendent of education in Canada West.

Lastly the cash balances should have vouchers which they never have—that is, to say where is [the] money? If in the man's pocket we must take his word for it and should know it at any rate, but if where it ought to be, in a bank, we should be told how deposited and get a bank certificate from him, or a return from the bank. Last week I partially audited our superintendent of education's accounts. The whole sum passing through his hands annually is about £60,000, the great bulk of which, about £45,000, is received by him in January and July, and almost immediately paid out, nevertheless on January 1st, 1854, he had according to me, though much disguised in his accounts, upwards of £13,000 in hand, and January 1st, 1855, upwards of £9,000. Where is the money? It never seems to have occurred to anybody to ask. It may be spent as it may be at interest on his behalf. I had just come to this conclusion (I mean that he had these balances) when an application from him was sent down to me to report upon in which he says that, in consequence of my having required him to send in his accounts quarterly, it would be much more convenient if instead of getting all his appropriations annually, about July or August, he were to have them paid him quarterly in advance. In my report which I made last night I show that under

the nine heads into which he divides his accounts and asks for his money quarterly in advance, in all of them he has had in hand constantly for a year and a half a much larger balance than the advance he asks for. In 1853 he got his £3,000 for 1854 on account of school libraries in advance, but January 1, 1855, fully £2,000 of it was still on hand. In the same year a grant was made of £500 a year towards a museum and he got his money for 1854 in advance, but January 1st, 1856, out of two annual payments he had only succeeded in expending £75. I think that man's cash balances want looking after. He is the Pope of Methodism in this country, but he mistook his profession. Nature intended him for a Jesuit.

This leads me to another question. If there is anything wrong in an account, of course I report; if there is anything bad in the system of keeping accounts I think it is clear I should report also. But when the system of managing the public business is bad, is that any concern of mine? I doubt. The question of large balances is in the debatable ground between the last two named questions, and that I have reported upon in the education case and in the opposite case of the Lunatic Asylum. This institution expends about £10,000 of public money, receiving about £500 from paying patients and other services, and renders accounts quarterly, carefully analysing the expenditure, quite a model in that respect for our public accountants. They go on tick for everything except the small sum they get from paying patients, their quarterly accounts being a list of their debts which they get a warrant to discharge, but the last quarter as they showed a balance of cash in hand £39, Dickenson being zealous as a new hand deducted this from their liabilities and they got a warrant only for the net balance. This large and admirably managed institution has therefore been carried on now for three months without a single sixpence of cash except from some paying patient who may have been discharged during the middle of the quarter, for they only make their payments quarterly. This will be amended for the future. It is much more questionable whether I should not be considered as going beyond my province if I were to report upon other questions of general finance, and yet I long to do so. We are eaten up with special funds which are daily increasing. Egerton Ryerson in his Education accounts must have nine special funds, and always keeps a heavy balance in each, as if I kept a baker's, butcher's, tailor's, etc. fund with always enough in it to meet any possible demand during the year. He only follows the example of his betters. We are a mass of special funds, and the consequence is that like Ryerson we have always a large balance on hand. With an annual revenue of about £1,500,000 the smallest of our monthly cash balances last year was £600,000 and the average about £850,000, and this does not include everything, for some of the special funds are not kept in the Receiver General's name, and, until Cayley altered it this year, some departments, as the Crown Lands, kept a separate purse and only paid over to the Receiver General when they had a large sum, such as £30,000 or £40,000 in the instance of the Crown Lands. I must watch an opportunity of reporting it as a matter of account.

I am only just beginning to see my way into the way the different departments keep their books. There has been a great improvement of late years, in a great

measure owing to Hincks[81] but there is still room for improvement. The Inspector General's Department is the most perfect but even there I find a curious want. Before the union it seems no accounts were kept with collectors of Revenue but their monthly returns were filed away in pigeon holes where they still repose. It was a great improvement when Hincks opened a sub-accountants ledger for those gentlemen who receive money for the public, but it does appear to me curious that to this day they have never thought of opening a ledger for the gentlemen who expend the public money. With such people as my friend Ryerson the pigeon hole system is still carried out. Whatever the Inspector General may do I mean to open a ledger for these sub-accountants with the new year.

But the two great departments I have to deal with are the Crown Lands and the Public Works—the one, after the customs, our principal source of revenue and the other its great consumer. As to the first, till three years ago they did not keep books on any system at all, but now they keep them by double entry and well as far as the remains of the old system and half a dozen irresponsible Lower Canadian special funds will allow and a villainous system they have of distinct branches of the department. If you enquire about any unintelligible entry the book-keeper can only tell you it was so returned to me but Mr. Spragge or Mr. Dawson or Mr. Langevin has charge of that branch. These different branches audit or do not audit themselves and only report totals. The whole department audits or does not audit itself and used as I told you to keep a separ ate purse. Even now they do not pay in the gross revenue and get warrants for their expenses, but they hand over only the balance after paying their expenses in many cases. The consequence is that the Chief Commission may order surveys, add a new Department of Mines or what not to give a friend a berth or give a pension to a clerk's widow, not only without authority of Parliament but without consulting his brother ministers. It is checked by the new regulation but not stopped. It may give you an idea how carelessly things were managed to give you an instance. In former days when land was a drug it was freely given away. United Empire Loyalists and their children born and to be born were entitled to grants of land, Militia men after the war, etc., etc. About fifteen years ago this was stopped, and land scrip, for £5 each, was issued to all claimants at so much an acre on their claim, as a legal tender in payment of land at its current rate. The whole country was flooded with it, it was at a great discount and for many years it almost annihilated the land revenue. Now it appears upon examining the gross results that notwithstanding much outstanding scrip, more has already been redeemed than ever was issued. When scrip came in in payment it never was checked with the scrip book, much of it was never defaced in any way and none in any effectual way, and none of it destroyed. I am hunting it up from its recesses and vaults of banks where it has been deposited and forgotten for years, and I think we have it all. I have commenced checking it, which will be a tedious business and require my constant supervision. I find that at one time the practice was for the commissioner to sign a whole scrip book at once in blank to the value of £10,000 and leave the clerks to fill them up afterwards. All I can say is that if I find all right they must be honester people in the Crown Lands than I ever gave them credit for. Another horrible mismanagement is the Crown Land agents scattered through the Province, through whom all lands are sold and whose receipts are binding on the department. They have to make monthly returns and payments, but many of them are always in arrear. Now an agent sells a quantity of land, receives the money and reports what he has done, remitting the money, or not reporting or remitting as the case may be. But suppose he does report and remit but not all his sales. The department knows nothing about it and has no means of knowing. Clergy reserves are sold on ten years credit. A man may have paid his instalments regularly though the agent may not have returned them, and it will first be found out when ten years have elapsed and he presents his ten receipts and claims his deed. Now I know some of these men to be great rogues and who shall say to what extent this has been carried. I am inclined to think the whole system of local agents should be done away with, but that is none of my business. I have the power to send a man to inspect their books if they have any and I think I shall do it, but I don't know that much would come of it. The great cure for the future, (but that would leave their land jobbing and favouritism untouched), would be to let them finger no cash. Wherever there is a land agency there is a bank agency not far off. The purchaser should pay his money into the bank, taking duplicate bank certificates which he would give the agent, one for the Receiver General and one for the Crown Lands Department.

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[81] Francis Hincks (1807-1885), who had been inspector-general of public accounts from 1842 to 1843 and from 1848 to 1851, and prime minister from 1851 to 1854. In 1855 he was appointed governor of Barbados and the Windward Islands.

The Board of Works however is the Augean stable which I most dread. Their accounts have never been audited since 1851 and then only partially They say one whole case containing vouchers was lost on the removal of the seat of government They have never balanced their books since 1852. They tried last year but after a month's work failed. Of the nature of their vouchers I have before spoken and of their reluctance to let me go into arrears Before I make up my mind about the latter I must see my way through this year But enough of my troubles for one letter

Yours etc.,

John Langton

To his Brother, William Langton

Toronto Feb 24th, 1856

My dear William

Since I wrote to you last I naturally know much more of my position and the sort of work before me than I did and your answer to my former letter which I have just received induces me to go on with the same subject. I find Cayley a pleasant man to work with, upon the principle that a silent man is a most agreeable companion to a great talker He lets me do whatever I like and If he does not very much assist me at any rate throws no impediments in my way I have engaged my head man Mr Cruse, of whom I have an excellent character, but although his engagement commenced on the 17th of January I have had no personal opportunity of judging him I was very deficient in office room at the time and I lent him to Dickenson and have never been able to get him back In some respects this is a nuisance as I had expected him to relieve me of much of the head work, in which I get no assistance from the others and which is almost more than I can manage with sitting up to all hours in the morning. Whilst in the office I can get nothing done. During office hours I am interrupted every moment by somebody and I generally find that I do more real work in the hour and a half I stay after the clerks are gone than in all the rest of the day, but I cannot keep my share of the work up to the rest without taking work home with me. However there is some advantage in Cruse being where he is. He is hastening the closing of the public accounts, which I have to audit when made up, and he is in the meantime getting acquainted with the system in the Inspector General's office, which will be of use to us hereafter. The rest are all temporary [One] at £300 a year is almost useless to me, but I have got him at a job at present unconnected with financial business (for I cannot trust him with figures), more of a statistical character, which with other literary portions of the business he does pretty well though a fearful nuisance from his constant interruptions to me in telling me what he has done or consulting what he is to do I hope to get rid of him soon. If I do I mean to have Mr Cambie as second clerk at £250 to keep up the general business of the office not directly connected with the auditing, of which we have a good deal as receiving reports from various institutions, countersigning and keeping a record of the notes issued by banks under the Free Banking Act and of the securities deposited by them with the Receiver General, and various other miscellaneous business which is handed over to us. Third Mr Greene whom I found here, very steady and constant and very accurate in figures but with very few ideas beyond figures, fourth and fifth Messrs. Barber and Patterson two young lads I brought in both very steady and willing and Barber with some head. I am training him to abstract and analyse and draw up general statements from confused details, and he promises very well though it is no present aid to me as I have to take as much or more trouble in teaching him and checking him than would enable me to do the work myself However it will I hope be a relief hereafter [The sixth] I mean to get rid of and I think the five will be my permanent staff as I can always get temporary assistance, but I may have to add a sixth My system is when any accounts come in to look cursorily over them myself first to see whether there is any peculiar feature which requires any special instructions beyond the general ones the clerks already have and then I hand them over to one of them to audit Each clerk has a book in which he enters all the remarks he finds to make, or rather two books one of which he is working with and one which I am using When he has finished I take his book and his accounts and give him the other book and fresh work. I then go over his remarks myself and always verify his observations before acting upon them If he is one in whose accuracy I have confidence I generally confine myself to what he has never worked upon assuming the rest to be correct but I often have to look over other parts, especially if large sums are concerned or there is a fault of system in the particular account, and I often find they have passed over what should have been remarked upon. On the blank side of their book I make my own observations, and when I have finished one man's account I write to him with my strictures and ask for his explanations. When I have everything as far rectified as I can I report if necessary to the Inspector General and I give the account to Mr Barber, as corrected, to arrange and analyse if it requires it and to enter into a statement book. Many of the accounts give rise to statements and tables of another character more in the nature of statistics, which are entered in another book, keeping the former one merely for statements of account. They are entered miscellaneously just as we make them up and are very various in their character some of them expansions of single items in others and relating to various periods of time. This is all I have attempted for the past and I only intend to commence my ledger from the beginning of this year It is an improvement upon the pigeon hole system of former days where there were stowed away, people hardly knew where, piles of accounts some accounts current without vouchers some vouchers without accounts, some the digest of abstracts and others a mass of confused entries of which you could only say that the totals show a certain amount received and another expended The accounts are at any rate all together and can be referred to by an index and they are so analysed as to show at a glance their leading features I don t know that I could have made much more out of past transactions but for the future I mean to have a regular ledger and I think I may probably have to keep also a statement book subsidiary to it and explanatory of the separate items of which some of the ledger accounts will be composed otherwise the ledger itself would become too bulky and confused a business. Thus the Board of Works would be an account in the ledger But they have at present upwards of thirty different appropriations for different works, besides more than that number of kinds of expenditure not under any distinct appropriation but which they claim the right of spending upon under their general Act. All these would form properly separate accounts in their ledger but not in mine I think and yet one must be able to see how these stand The Board of Works would I think be my only account its separate works being only items in it, whilst the details of these items properly analysed would appear in the general statement book or perhaps in this case in a separate book for that department alone I have had to open another book elucidating this same Board of Works. There are existing contracts on many of the works running over several years before they are finally closed in some cases the contractors getting advances, and at other times having a drawback kept from them, so that I cannot keep track of these contracts without opening an account for the several contractors. The same remark applies to their superintendents who have frequently balances in hand and at other times seem to be out of pocket. I have therefore opened a subsidiary book for the Board of Works contractors and agents. What I may have to do of a similar character with other departments I hardly know yet. I must obviously keep a record of open accounts in some way In some cases I have merely entered in the statement book the list of open balances connected with a certain account, as Statement of the balances of the appropriations to the several grammar schools in Upper Canada for the year 1855 which remained unpaid on 1st Jan., 1856 But where the open accounts are of a more complicated character each may require to be stated separately and that would encumber the statement book and a separate book may have to be opened as for the Board of Works contractors the abstract of which properly arranged would make a proper account for the statement book. All this makes a great deal of book keeping, but when we get rid of arrears and all square up to the current time I think we may keep it so. Hitherto as I told you before whilst they have kept a ledger for the people collecting money they have had none for those spending it, except in the case of departments of government; and then they appear to me to have got into some confusion by mixing up in one account two essentially different things—viz., the money placed at their disposal and how much has been paid to them of it, and the money which they have received and how they have expended it. I do not see my way quite clearly, but I cannot devise any way of keeping a record of these two things in one account without confusion. I think there should be two distinct ledgers, or two accounts for each accountant in one ledger, showing the state of the appropriation and the state of the expenditure, the former way would be best for the future I think, but the latter is the one I have adopted in my present statement book. This is more essentially necessary where there are other receipts besides the appropriation, and where these receipts form a leading feature of the account I question whether there should not be a separate revenue account. Thus the Board of Works would have 1st their appropriation account, 2nd their revenue and maintenance account, if they are allowed to deduct from the revenue the expense of keeping the work up, but much better a revenue account balanced by their payments to the Receiver General. 3rdly maintenance and repairs of public works either to be paid from time to time by order in council out of the revenue or at once from the consolidated fund into which the revenue would go. The revenue should not be kept as a special fund applicable to the maintenance according to our besetting sin of special funds, but the revenue should go into the common purse and the repairs etc., out of it whilst the revenue and the maintenance accounts would always afford the materials of a statement, which would not be a ledger account, of how much the revenue from each work exceeded or fell short of the expense of keeping it up and how these two things compared with each other on the aggregate of all the works. And here would come a difficulty in deciding what was a repair and what a new work. If funds are short the Board is rather apt to shroud the non paying character of a work by getting repairs done under the guise of a new work If they are plentiful they will spend largely on improvements without the disagreeable ordeal of the House of Assembly by very extensive repairs out of revenue. 4th Expenditure under special appropriations by Parliament and perhaps distinct from this 5th Expenditure of a casual and unprovided kind under Order in Council (much too large an account) and 6th Expenditure under the general powers of their Act not by Order in Council (a very much too large and ill defined account) All these things it would be very desirable to see stated separately though I am not at all clear that they should be separate accounts in the ledger What I do see my way the clearest in is that there should be a separate ledger for appropriations, but this is not without its difficulties. When a special sum is appropriated either in the annual estimates or in some special Act or in a general Act appropriating an annual sum, there would be no difficulty in opening an account in the ledger with each appropriation against which the warrants would be charged as they issue; and I have pressed Cayley to introduce the rule recommended in England by the Committee on Public Accounts, but I cannot trace whether acted upon, that any balance of an appropriation unexpended after a certain time should die a natural death. Our books are encumbered with such unexpended small balances which are forgotten till it is desirable to hunt them up to cover some expenditure which will not exactly bear the light of day. When I was in Parliament I wanted to get a man paid some small sum clearly owing to him for many years, but Hincks would not put it in the estimates. Richards[*] however the then Attorney General put me up to the approved method, and together we found an old appropriation before the union of the provinces on which we contrived to make my friend chargeable. I am afraid worse cases than mine have gone through the same process. This however is a digression. Then any Order in Council would have to come into the same ledger, not as a separate account for each order, which would be too cumbersome, especially as it is generally immediately balanced by a warrant for the same amount, but for each service to which the orders in council were applicable. This I think would be better than entering the Orders in Council in the same account as the Parliamentary appropriations for the same service. So far I see my way clearly, the only thing wanted being that I should be furnished with a memorandum of each Order in Council authorizing the expenditure of money as it is passed. The great diffi culty is with the general Acts. There must be general Acts authorizing money to be expended for certain purposes, as the administration of justice, the exact amount of which cannot be known beforehand. In such cases it has been usual to issue warrants without any order in council. Whether such payments should not appear in the ledger at all, which would be unsatisfactory as it ought to shew all expenditure, or whether Orders in Council should not be required, which would be difficult to manage, or whether I should simply balance the account for each service when I know what it comes to by an entry of "authorized by Act so and so," I have not yet determined. To require orders in council for each separate payment would be excessively inconvenient; to require an order in council for a definite amount on account to be renewed as wanted, so as to keep before the Council from time to time the state of the expenditure, would be better; but the present system at any rate appears very imperfect, for without Parliament or even the Council knowing anything about it, it gives the Inspector General and in practice the Deputy Inspector General power to spend money of which no one can tell till long after it is spent whether it was really chargeable under the general Act. The Board of Works for instance, under its general Act, has charge of all public buildings, etc., and incurs all sorts of miscellaneous expenditure and gets warrants to meet it, without the matter ever coming up before Council. It no doubt renders an account afterwards, of which there are boxes full which have never been audited and passed, though the late Deputy Inspector General says they were all examined, which I very much doubt; and no doubt also the substance of these accounts is published annually in the printed pubhis accounts in great lump items the title of which gives very little clue to their component parts. This is my difficulty with the appropriation ledger. It is true that an appropriation book has for some years past been kept which is in fact a sort of ledger of the kind, though taking no note of orders in council and general Acts or indeed permanent Acts authorizing an annual fixed expenditure. It contains only the yearly appropriations on one side, and the warrants as they issue are entered on the other, and no balances of previous years' appropriations are carried into the new book. But if the present appropriation book were improved in this respect, still it might lead to very fallacious results unless in some way brought *en rapport* with the expenditure ledger. The two things are so far distinct that they should be kept in separate books or in separate accounts in the same book, but they are so far connected that they must be taken together to give a clear idea of how any account stands. An instance of this occurred only the other day in the case of the Superintendent of Education East.* He and his brother of the West are perfect contrasts. My Jesuitical friend Ryerson has got the genius of order and system. His accounts and vouchers are a model for all our public departments. As he has been accustomed to render them they convey the smallest amount of detailed information, but when asked for the minutest details were forthcoming in a moment. Even when I asked for a voucher for his balance in hand I got a certificate the next morning from the cashier that £17 000 was lying to his credit in the Bank of Upper Canada in his own name and about £7,000 more in his name of office. He draws his appropriations with the most beautiful regularity, the misfortune is that he does not spend them. The man in the East on the contrary is an honest but very thick headed individual who renders his accounts in such detail that you can hardly understand them, and never touched a penny of public money in his life. He draws out cheques from time to time as he ascertains what sums he has to pay, and every month or two when they amount to a sufficient sum he issues them and gets a warrant for the exact amount. Some time ago he overdrew his account and, as he had at the time some £30,000 unaccounted for, a clerk was sent down to overhaul his books, when it appeared that with the exception of a quantity of loose papers and the talons of the cheques there was very little in the shape of books to overhaul. The clerk got an inkling of how affairs really stood, but it was never clearly made out till I disentangled it the other day. Besides the permanent educational grant to Upper and Lower Canada we have been in the habit of granting annual[ly] an additional sum, varying from £10,000 to £25,000, and the honest man seeing this and forgetting the existence of Upper Canada thought the whole of it belonged to him and squared his expenses accordingly, believing himself to be keeping within a very wide margin instead of his income and annually reporting an unexpended balance which we annually voted away in aid [of] building schoolhouses and supporting colleges, etc., whereas he has been annually expending £4,000 a year beyond his income, after our deductions. This was not felt at first because the apportionment to schools for the last half of 1855 is never paid until 1856, according to their system, and some portions often not for two years, he having to wait till the parishes have made an equivalent appropriation which, the Lower Canadians not being a tax-loving people, they are very slow to do. It thus happened that it was not till his overexpenditure on his appropriations exceeded a half year's income that he ever actually overdrew his account and so attracted the attention of government to the matter. It is true that in the pigeon holes lay his accounts of the sums he had paid to various parishes in driblets, payments on account of 1853, 54, and 55 all mixed up together and with the funniest of vouchers, and all I have not the slightest doubt absolutely correct, but as long as he did not absolutely overdraw his account nobody perceived that he was paying his 1854 expenses with his 1855 income at the same moment that we were voting away an imaginary unexpended balance of 1854. This is a long story and I have been specially amused with it because the other day, or the very evening when I had made a report to Cayley upon the subject, I took my ladies to the House where they heard a very hot debate as to what was the proper way of spending the unexpended balance of the Lower Canada School Fund. The moral of the story is this that it is not enough to know whether a man has drawn what he is entitled to on the one hand, or whether he has spent what he has drawn on the other but whether he has spent it for the purpose for which he was entitled to draw it.

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[*] The Hon. (afterwards Sir) William Buell Richards (1815-1889), member for Leeds in the Legislative Assembly, and attorney general in the Hincks-Morin ministry from 1851 to 1853, when he was appointed to a puisne judgeship in the Court of Common Pleas for Upper Canada.

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* The Hon. Pierre Joseph Olivier Chauveau (1820-1890) who became superintendent of education in Canada East after the session of 1854-55, succeeding Dr Jean Baptiste Meilleur (1796-1878).

You will perceive that I have only spoken in detail of two or three accounts. In fact I have only spoken of difficulties which I know and I do not know how many more are in store for me. I have seen no Post

Office accounts, though the Postmaster General* tells me that about March he thinks I shall have the first half of last year and that it will keep me busy for a couple of months. I have seen no Crown Land accounts respecting the nature of which I am absolutely in the dark, and I have seen no Inspector General's accounts and Dickenson tells me I shall hardly do so till they are in the printer's hands.

I am ashamed of the length of this letter and must try to close it in this half sheet. I am conscious I am likely to be a very obnoxious individual and I have no doubt Egerton Ryerson will hate me cordially. I must bear it as best I may. I will try not to become impracticable as you say, and I don't think I am very, but it is difficult sometimes to draw the line.

Yours etc.

JOHN LANGTON

To his Brother, Wm. Langton

Toronto, April 17, 1856.

MY DEAR WILLIAM,

I must give you another yarn about the public accounts, being a subject about which for want of any more agreeable one I think of all day and dream of most of the night. I expected to find a mess but the reality exceeded my expectations, especially as I have only yet got into the threshold of the dirtiest stall in the Augean stable—the Board of Works. I know that in that department accounts have been balanced by charges to contingencies to a great extent. I have no official knowledge of it yet and [it] may be some time

before I have, because I can't get the accounts and the utmost costiveness prevails with regard to information. The sudden death of their bookkeeper last night will no doubt be made the excuse for more delay. Probably the impossibility of getting the books balanced had something to do with it, for he died the death of Lord Mountcoffeehouse the Irish peer. With the Crown Lands I am also at present at a standstill, except that I discovered the other day forgeries of land scrip to the extent of £6,000. I know who did it pretty well but I cannot find any clue to his confederates, and if I could bring it home to him, which is perhaps doubtful, he cleared out to the States two years ago and is beyond my reach. I am at present on the scent of game in another direction, and although there is a sort of sameness in the occupation there is also variety and some excitement. I must give you two specimens, one of which you have heard of before.

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* The Hon. Robert Spence (1811-1868), postmaster-general from 1854 to 1858.

We are a very wealthy people. We raise a large amount of revenue from a very moderate customs tariff and we hardly know how to spend it. I think we shall be relieved in this respect for the future because our railway speculations have provided a very efficient issue which will prevent us dying of plethora. It is astonishing how coolly we all bore the news that interest on debt to the amount of £200,000 a year which we had only guaranteed and never expected to pay is by the repudiation of the Grand Trunk and other companies, to be met for the future by us. This however by the bye. Amongst the other consequences of our excess of revenue we always kept some half million idle in the banks. With an income of not much more than a million and a half in 1854 we never had less than £600,000 and sometimes upwards of £800,000 so lying.

In 1855 the diminished imports and increased expenses had somewhat relieved this determination of blood to the banks, but still we generally had from 3 to 4 or £500,000 unemployed and the balances were duly reported to the Governor General every evening. Some of this was at three per cent. interest, subject to two or three months' notice, in various banks but the bulk was at call in the Bank of Upper Canada which is our financial agent, and great is the outcry against this favoured institution in consequence. I had a call from the cashier the other day who complained that whilst they were supposed to have more than £200,000 in their hands they were really put to great inconvenience in their general business by being in advance to government about £50,000 and he wanted me to speak to the Inspector General about it, who he did not believe knew how things really stood. I must say I was taken aback, but I immediately commenced investigations and I found that a practice has long existed than which nothing can be worse and which renders these balances in hand sent in to the Governor General every evening so much waste paper. At the end of every month the resident engineer gives each contractor what is called a monthly estimate showing what work he has done, how much is to be kept as drawback and what he may get payment for. He takes this to the bank who give him the money. They send it to the Board of Works who after examining and checking, etc., issue a certificate to the bank. This certificate they send to the Council office who at their leisure prepare a warrant which is sent to the Inspector General, and it is not till he signs the warrant that he knows anything about it. In the ordinary course it is at least a month after the money has been paid before it comes into the public accounts; and if a particular expenditure is of a nature which it is not desired to make known, especially whilst Parliament is in session or the public accounts are being made up for the year, there is nothing more easy than to keep it back a little in some of its numerous stages. After the warrant does come in it may be found all wrong, paid once before, unauthorized, etc., of all of which there are instances now in the office. Delay occurs in consequence and the disagreeable item does not appear in the published accounts, but the money is nevertheless really spent and irrecoverable. The bank advances to the Board of Works at this present moment are something like £100,000.

Then there is the Post Office. It is not a paying concern with us but a constant source of expense, as we have innumerable post offices scattered over the country the receipts from which do not pay a fiftieth part of the cost of conveying the mail. I don't object to that if we knew what it cost us, but we do not. Last session £20,000 was voted to cover the deficiencies of 1854 and 55, at which time we had the Postmaster General's report that the deficiency for 1854 was £7,000 odd. I question very much if three members in the House knew (I did not) that the Postmaster General's financial year ends on the 31st of March and that when he told us in May, 1855 that he was deficient £7,000 for 1854 he meant up to March, 1854. What he was deficient up to March, 1855, two months after the year was over, he knew no more than we did; but he supposed the other £13,000 would cover it. There is the greatest trouble in getting returns from postmasters, whose emoluments are so small that you have no hold upon them on that score; and I have up to the present time only got the accounts to June of last year, and not three weeks ago the end of the year ending March 31 1855 Up to that time I now know that the deficiency was £29,000, to meet which there was only £13,000 and since then a whole year has elapsed, with the expenses of carrying the mail daily increasing both from the general rise of everything and the increased number of non-paying offices. The Postmaster General has not the smallest idea what the deficiency will be in the year just past, but the bank which has been finding the ways and means all the time has a very good idea, it is £57,000 These are goodly sums to be expended, not only without sanction of Parliament but without the consent or even knowledge of the finance minister

The Crown Lands also have a good pull at purse, and there is another case of which I had some cognisance which illustrates the impropriety of this system. Last year we had a new Militia Bill in consequence of your taking away all our soldiers, but Parliament with the jealousy which always characterizes popular assemblies grumbled at the bill and especially the expense and put in a clause saying that the payment must depend upon an annual vote of Parliament, and the Ministry very glad to escape from an unpopular measure accepted the clause and said that as they did not intend to organize they would not ask for a vote that year Nevertheless they did partially organize, and the pay lists came in to me for audit or rather the Deputy Inspector General asked me before payment what was to be done. I pointed out that it was not only an unprovided expense, but that the Act positively prohibited any thing being paid till a vote had been taken. So they privately instructed the bank to make an advance

You can now understand how our apparent balances dwindle away. I have declared open war against the system and Cayley gives me a lukewarm support, but he is too timid a hand for any efficient reform. The Board of Works declare reform impossible, the Postmaster General declares it impossible, and the only warm support I get is from the Bank and from the Receiver General who being the cash keeper has a commendable objection to allow any extraneous fingers to get into his purse. Nevertheless I will conquer. There is a Committee of the House on Public Accounts the chairman * of which is a fine upright fellow, a wealthy merchant and a great friend of mine. I have told him all about it and, although a leader of opposition, he has agreed that I am to do my best to get the Ministry to make the reform, and if I can't do that then we will bring it out before the Committee. It is a very difficult position for me. I don't like anything that can be construed into treachery to the men in office but I can't conceal anything I know to be so grievously wrong. John Young the aforesaid chairman sent for me and told me that he believed both of us mainly desired, politics apart, to put the financial business on a proper footing. That he felt in entire ignorance of the nature of the business in the financial offices and did not know where to begin. He said that he would put me such general questions as would enable me to tell where was a field for research, and he did. I might to be sure have answered them truly and yet have left him in the dark, but although it looked like volunteering information

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* John Young (1811-1878), a prominent merchant of Montreal who had been elected member of the Legislative Assembly for Montreal City in November, 1851. He had been commissioner of public works in the Hincks-Morin government from October, 1851 to September, 1852.

I thought it the better course to be very open. In a private conversation I told him afterwards a great deal more, upon which he agreed to leave me to work by myself first and if that failed he will back me. It is their own fault making it a dependent office. I should have had the power of independent reporting and I always told them so, and they knew that I would not assist to conceal anything. Nevertheless I was not easy in my mind so I told John Macdonald what I had done the other day and he acknowledged that I was right. It will end in giving me the power of independent reporting, but I should not be surprised if there was a row first. I may also mention that the bank being desirous of making a poor mouth, as the saying is, overstated the case and, if closely enquired into, I do not think they are really in advance to Government at all. The advances to contractors in strictness are and certainly ought to be pure banking transactions. I have little doubt that the bank get a discount on their advance when it would clearly not be government they were paying. It is a business which any bank would be glad to get for the security is good, and the presumptive evidence that the contractor is entitled to draw much clearer than in most cases where a bank discounts a draft; besides it is exactly the sort of business they like, for their notes are paid away to labourers and small tradesmen and are much longer in coming back upon them than if they assisted a merchant to make a large payment. Moreover £11,000 of the post office advance appears to be money not really paid but credits given to money order post offices, so that that sum is really never out of their hands though fluctuating about amongst their different branches and agencies. Then all public accountants keep their

money in the bank, or ought to do, and the £23,000 which Ryerson holds, though paid by the bank to Government, is still really in their hands. This does not however affect the main question I have to deal with.

The second subject is the old story of Ryerson. I took occasion to ask at the bank whether they allowed him interest, and they do at three per cent. and I got a statement of the amounts so paid him since 1851; when therefore the Dr. returned from England the day before yesterday he found a pleasant note from me calling upon him to account for nearly £1,600 had and received for the public uses of the province, not a very pleasant reception for a man of such intense respectability. I have no answer as yet but I have no doubt, from his great efficiency as school superintendent and the great power of the Methodist connection, I shall be accused of a conspiracy to upset our school system, etc., etc. The great father of lies himself is not up to more cunning dodges than my reverend friend, and the way in which he has kept his account was evidently intended to meet the possibility of such a charge. It has been under several different names, sometimes two or three at once and balances transferred from one to the other, but all of them under some official designation as Superintendent of Education, Legislative School Grant, Board of Education, etc. This at once removes any doubts as to the interest being public money, and he will not I think attempt to deny it, but triumphantly point to the title of the account to shew that he never intended it to be otherwise. How he will explain why he never rendered any account of these sums being in his hands is another thing, but from long acquaintance with the man I have no doubt he has an answer ready. What makes it susceptible of being construed into part of an attack upon the school system is a further complication which I will try to explain. When they were making out the annual accounts, the education fund being in great confusion I made out a statement and got them to close the books accordingly, showing a balance overdrawn by Lower Canada of £5,825 and a balance still available for Upper Canada of £300 odd, relying altogether upon the balances January 1st, 1855 being correct. When I got the proof sheets of the Public Accounts (which I had never seen until then) I found a payment for increased salaries (which I had never heard of before) charged to Consolidated Revenue whereas by the Order in Council it was to be charged to Education Fund which brought out a balance against Upper Canada of £179 13 4, which I got accordingly altered, and as I was then drawing up a statement for the House of Assembly I based it upon this second rectification of the school account. I may say by the way that I purposely drew up the statement in such a way as to shew that Lower Canada had been constantly overdrawing and Upper Canada underexpending, and it does not say much for our financiers that nobody perceived it. The only remark upon Ryerson's balances was an attack upon Government from Mackenzie for making Ryerson draw these sums to deposit in the pet bank, as if it was any advantage to them to pay him interest instead of paying Government none. As for Lower Canada, both Ministers and the Opposition are firmly and unalterably persuaded that there are large unexpended balances, and in spite of my statement and numerous further details which I have given individual members they have just passed a new school Act, which proceeds upon the assumption of about £6,000 a year unclaimed balances whilst the superintendent has really been overexpending about £2,000 a year. There used to be large unclaimed balances, but schools have been more popular in Lower Canada of late and the real object of the Bill is to starve the common schools in order to build up the higher class of educational institutions which are under the control of the priests. Cartier, the Minister who introduced the bill, can plead no ignorance and did not deny his knowledge of the truth to me and scarcely denied his object, so the question having become one of policy and not of accounts is removed from my jurisdiction. He said in so many words that it sounded better to call them unclaimed balances, but whether unclaimed or not he had provided that the money should come out of the common school fund. Honest that at any rate. However to return to Egerton Ryerson. If the House took no notice of my statement Mr. Hodgins the Deputy Superintendent of Education did. . . . Mr. Hodgins wrote me a very indignant letter for saying that they were £179 overdrawn and showing that the error arose from my giving them credit for the half only of an additional grant of £25,000 in 1855 instead of their share according to population, the principle followed in dividing the original £50,000 a year, and which had been followed with respect to additional grants also since 1853 when they first commenced. Now I had before me when I made the statement Ryerson's application for the larger share and the report thereon of the Inspector General and Deputy Inspector General both saying that former additional grants had been equally divided, and the Order in Council affirming the same fact (orders in council should not affirm facts) and deciding that the same course must continue to be fol lowed. This was enough for me, but Mr. Hodgins' letter induced me to go back and I found the astounding fact that, although £10,000 had been so granted in 1853 and paid, there was not in any book in the Inspector General's Department or in the published public accounts the faintest record of how much of it had been paid to Dr. Ryerson and how much to Dr. Meilleur.* It is true that I found another £5,000 which had nothing to do with the matter but which had apparently from an erroneous reference in the margin been taken for Dr. Meilleur's half of the £10,000, but the history of the £10,000 itself was a blank. I had therefore to look to the accounts of the superintendents themselves and I found that Ryerson had accounted for his division of the larger share and Dr. Meilleur for his of the smaller, so that Hodgins was right in point of fact and the Order in Council wrong. I satisfied myself that the Hincks government had intended the £10,000 to be a regular annual addition to the grant, to be divided like the rest, and upon the strength of this Ryerson had prepared and Hincks had carried an amended school Act providing for the manner in which it was to be expended (it has not by the bye been so expended in any one particular). In my researches, however, I came upon another astounding fact, that Ryerson according to his custom of drawing in advance had again received his share early in 1854, apparently under his Act although that did not grant the money but only showed how what might be granted should be expended, and when the new Government made the additional grant for 1854 £15,000 instead of £10,000, he also claimed and got his share of the £15,000 under the estimates. As for the Lower Canada man, his accounts had got into such hopeless confusion that a clerk was sent down who commencing at 1848 reconstructed them and gave him credit for his half of the three additional grants of 1853, 4, and 5. I had therefore to correct my statement a third time showing that, on the supposition of an equal division, whilst Lower Canada had overdrawn £5,325, Upper Canada had overdrawn £5,631, and the two sums were so near each other that I recommended taking a sponge to the whole transaction and starting afresh. This was I think not an unreasonable proposition but it brought down upon me Mr. Hodgins again, with greater indignation than before, with a statement beginning in 1846 showing that he had only overdrawn £2,400 odd. It is true that a couple of days after he asked to withdraw the statement and put in a new one acknowledging to £4,690, but it is curious that an acute man should not have perceived that all this was not *instead of* but *in addition to* the sum I had named. I in the meantime went back to 1846 also and lest I might have to make a fifth correction I satisfied myself that in 1844 and 45 he had just got his appropriation and indeed 11d short of it so I think I have got a firm foothold at last and I make him £12,900 overdrawn. This balance may be thus analysed in round numbers £4,700 which he acknowledges to be really overdrawn, £6,200 which he acknowledges to have received but claims a right to, and £2,000 which the Public Accounts show were paid him but he does not charge himself with. I therefore have called upon Ryerson to account for this also and shall send a clerk to examine the books. Irrespective of the Dr., however, what are we to do with the accounts as between Upper and Lower Canada? We may take a sponge to the whole thing and begin again, which would be the best thing, but I doubt whether Lower Canada will stand our having received £7,000 more than they. Or we may make both pay up, or make Upper Canada pay the difference or Lower Canada receive the difference, or make Upper Canada pay to Lower Canada half the difference. Any of the last methods would be very unpopular in Upper Canada, for we are very proud and justly proud of our schools upon which besides the government grant we spend nearly £300,000 a year from municipal taxation and parting with any of Ryerson's balances, especially to Lower Canada, would go very much against the grain. We shall not grumble at Ryerson grasping more than his due for so good a purpose and as no doubt this year the savings will be largely poured out the schools will be more popular than ever. I have no doubt that Ryerson will mix up the two things and lose sight of his own irregularity in defending his school fund from the plunder which I instigate, and it is not consolatory to think that the public, when it comes before them, not having the fear of arithmetic before their eyes will care nothing for my figures, but only think of protecting the Upper Canada school moneys from diminution or object to any additional grant to Lower Canada to go into the hands of the priests, a feeling in which I most cordially participate. I should not be at all surprised if Ryerson comes out of the contest with flying colours and honoured as a great public benefactor. He is undoubtedly a very clever fellow and a very deep one. For years past he has worked the schools till he has centered all power in himself, each new bill lopping off some of the municipal or other extraneous control, and he has latterly made a great push to get the colleges and university under his thumb. He has a journal of education as his organ, carried on at the cost of the province and distributed to every school section, which is a powerful engine—and last not least he is the Pope of Methodism. Cayley is terribly afraid of him and leaves me to fight him alone, Ridout of the bank is in mortal terror lest his revelations should get him into trouble, even our Chancellor * who is one of the most opinionative and overbearing men I know, who rules the Court of Chancery with a rod of iron and has converted the two Vice Chancellors into lay figures, who bullies the Senate of the University, is visibly cowed in the presence of Ryerson. He is surrounded as by an atmosphere with such a concentrated essence of respectability, and meets all opposition with such a calm unruffled air of conscious superiority that I will not deny that I am half afraid of him myself. I have had several spats with the Chancellor and he does not bully me as he does the rest, and if he does a little sometimes I submit to it because he really is a first rate man and a strong hand at the helm is much wanted. I had also a spat with Ryerson once to whom I gave a very much deserved lecture which he bore with the air of a martyr prepared to endure even more than that in a just cause and when I had done and silence prevailed in the Senate I felt astonished at myself that I should have assailed such self sustained virtue. I would rather meet the Chancellor any day and as for the Board of Works it will be a flea bite in comparison.

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* See note p. 239.

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* The Hon. William Hume Blake (1809-1870), chancellor of Upper Canada (1850-62) and chancellor of the University of Toronto (1853-56)

So much for public accounts, however you will be glad to hear that I have got a first rate man in Mr Cruse. Neat, and accurate, rather precise and deliberate, as becomes a bookkeeper but not slow, and above all with a head to devise something new as well as to carry out what is established. He is already beginning to save me a great deal of trouble. I think after all it was my best course not to have a chief clerk at all until I had so far seen my way as to know what I intended to do. I have opened a ledger into which all public expenditure of every kind will enter under the heading of the different services for which it is paid including also to complete the system of double entry the authorities for paying There is nothing similar to this kept in any office. The ledger in the Inspector General's Department is kept under the heading of the authorities, the services being lumped up and no special funds come into it, being kept in a separate book. I do not know how they manage it. I cannot see my way clearly on that system. On my own I do. The great difficulty I anticipated I have got removed viz getting the requisite data. They have commenced now sending me the orders in Council regularly and I have arranged to have the duplicate warrants filed in my office so that I have a complete record both of authorities and payments

The Ministry are in a most contemptible state of confusion. The Ministry themselves and the party supporting them want Sir Allan* to resign and he who is ill in bed won't They dare not, for that would leave him in, and there is no knowing what advice he might gave the Governor General. John Ross[*] resigned yesterday on Grand Trunk questions and a Hinckaite (a very good fellow) succeeds him. I think there is no doubt Sir Allan must go and I think Cayley also. John A. Macdonald is now the recognized leader, but he is anything but strong in reality. There is a talk of bringing Robert Baldwin[†] into Parliament again, in which case a strong ministry might be formed without Macdonald, but at present apparently he must be the nucleus. There is a sad deficiency of available men. The parties are so split up that no man can tell what will come next. The present ministry is at any rate only a temporary evil.

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* Sir Allan Napier MacNab (1798-1862), president of the council and prime minister since 1854. He resigned his office in May, 1856.

Yours etc.,

JOHN LANGTON

TO HIS BROTHER, WM. LANGTON

Toronto, May 24th, 1856

MY DEAR WILLIAM,

We have had a very stirring time of it in the political world of late and my ladies have got so much interested in it that they generally go to the house every night to hear the debates. The whole of this session has been a state of chronic crisis for the ministry, though there are of course fits of the disease which look as if they were really going to lead to some change. There have been no less than five want of confidence votes during the session in which the ministry has come off victorious, but only to be exposed to the same thing the next week. The last has been the most serious as the agony has lasted nearly a fortnight. The debate lasted Wednesday, Thursday and Friday and, as Saturday is always a holiday, every one expected that it would end that night, but for some reason or other the ministry themselves were evidently anxious to postpone the decision and the debate was adjourned again to Monday. On Monday night however the eastern steamer did not come in from bad weather, and as several opposition members were on board who had been home for the Sunday it was the opposition this time which wanted delay. I sat up till four a. m. when I left them in hot debate and found them at it still when I returned soon after nine in the morning. At noon the missing men arrived and one would have thought that they had enough of it, however they kept it up till past midnight again, when the vote was taken with a majority of twenty three for ministers. But the Upper Canada vote was six against them, and of the absent five, two were opposition men, two were with great difficulty persuaded by ministers to keep out of the House, and Sir Allan himself was the fifth. This from our peculiar position led to a further complication. It has always been a doubtful question whether the ministry are bound to have a double majority. Most men repudiate the doctrine and yet it is frequently acted upon, and as long as our present system continues of a ministry half Upper and half Lower Canadian it is impossible entirely to ignore the sectional majorities. In the present instance it is more particularly compli cated because it is a coalition ministry, two of the Upper Canada section being Reformers * and three Conservatives,† and all the reform supporters have deserted them but four. In fact there is no doubt that the ministry as a whole has lost the confidence of the House and country although it may not suit people's book to turn them out just yet. It did not therefore create surprise, when the House met on Wednesday, that none of the ministry were in their places and that the Solicitor General ‡ moved the adjournment till Friday. It is pretty well known that all the Upper Canadians except Sir Allan tendered their resignation but Sir Edmund would not acknowledge the double majority principle and refused to accept it on that ground and Sir Allan on the same ground would not tender his. Upon this the whole ministry Upper and Lower resigned except Sir Allan who said His Excellency might fill up his place but he would not give even a colour to the doctrine by voluntarily giving up. Now comes the most curious part of the business. Sir Edmund entrusted Colonel Taché the senior French member of the old cabinet, with the formation of a new ministry. He called in J. A. MacDonald and between them they re-established exactly the old ministry except Sir Allan. The thing was really most absurd. The country has certainly no confidence in Sir Allan who is looked upon as the embodiment of Upper Canada Toryism but to replace him as Premier by Col. Taché, who is the essence of Lower Canada Toryism, would certainly not win back many of their Upper Canada friends, especi-

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[*] The Hon. John Ross (1818-1871), a follower of the Hon. Robert Baldwin, appointed a legislative councillor in December 1848. He had been speaker of the Legislative Council in the Conservative ministries of 1854 and 1855, but he resigned the office on April 18, 1856. He was succeeded by Colonel Taché, who continued for a time to hold the office of receiver-general. In April, 1856, the Hon. Joseph Curran Morrison (1816-1885) was brought into the Cabinet without a portfolio. In May, 1856, he became receiver-general.

[†] The Hon. Robert Baldwin (1804-1858), prime minister of Canada from 1842 to 1844 and from 1848 to 1851.

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* Spence and Morrison.

† Macdonald, Cayley and the Hon. P. M. Vankoughnet (1823-1869) president of the council and minister of agriculture.

‡ The Hon. (afterwards Sir) Henry Smith (1812-1868) solicitor-general for Upper Canada.

ally as what had shaken the Upper Canada Liberals lately was the abandonment of everything to the Quebec-Priest Tory section of Lower Canada whom Col. Taché represents. Individually Sir Allan has done no harm this session as he has been confined to his bed with the gout since the second week. If therefore the old ministry come back to face the same majority against them it must only be that they have abandoned their double majority ground on which they resigned after getting rid of the only man amongst them who held the same constitutional doctrine which they now are prepared to hold. On Friday* the old man, who is pluck to the backbone, was carried into the House in his chair to meet his enemies and his friends and he was enthusiastically received but the rest were not visible, and the Solicitor General again moved an adjournment till Monday. Sir Allan spoke sitting but in their absence would not make his full statement. Since then (for the House spoke out very plainly its opinion upon the subject and several new defections were announced) it is rumoured that the more prudent of the ministry will not keep office and it is doubtful whether even on Monday they will be ready to announce themselves.

What has made these debates the more interesting to us is that I have been lugged into them. I told you that I had given evidence before the Committee on Public Accounts which would beget a row and the committee very cunningly contrived to present their report the day the want of confidence vote came on. It and the evidence were not printed when the debate was going on, but the report was read, and it and the newspapers made a great deal more of my evidence than it amounted to. The committee and the papers founded charges on my evidence against the ministry some of which were true enough, though the system established long before their day and not themselves was in fault, and others which were really not warranted by the facts. The impression however left on the House and country is that I made the charges. Now of the three departments implicated the Postmaster General made the best defence he could without naming me; the Board of Works, the worst of the lot, was very polite; but the Crown Lands defended themselves by attacking me. Cauchon, who certainly has mistaken the spelling of his name, read in Parliament three papers prepared by his subordinates, declaring my statements in the evidence to be entirely false and charging me with neglecting my duty and never having audited their accounts at all. Now the facts are these. On the 28th of February I wrote to him with my remarks upon his accounts. It was a long letter but I will only mention three points which were made the foundation of the attack. (1) In his account with the Receiver General he professes to have an unapplied balance of £10,000 odd of which no notice was taken in the accounts sent to me, and this £10,000, which I heard of from the Receiver General, does not at all correspond with their books. In my letter I asked for an explanation of this which I could not understand. (2) In the Woods and Forests account there is an account of expenditure to the extent of £9,000 entirely without vouchers, which I mentioned to him almost in the words I have used to you. (There were however many similar things remarked upon for of a total expenditure of £58,000 there were no vouchers sent to me for £17,000 and insufficient ones for £25,000.) (3) He had paid in to the Receiver General or professed to have paid in £5,000 odd which he had never collected. To this letter I got no reply till April 24th, and from that day to this nothing more than that brief letter of half a page. When asked by the committee whether I had any remarks to make upon the Crown Lands account, I gave them a copy of this letter, so that if it contains a charge, the charge was at any rate made to the commissioner himself. In his speech he said that he had not considered my letter of any particular importance, and that it had been altogether overlooked, and it appears that the man at the head of the Woods and Forests had never even heard of it till the committee reported. He then charges me with neglecting my duty because I had never come to his office to examine his books, etc., and says that my charge that there was an expenditure of £9,000 without vouchers is without the least foundation in fact, in proof of which he brought a wheelbarrow full of papers into the House. Moreover he, who has made himself ridiculous by converting his office into a convent and not allowing his clerks to speak to any one except in his presence or that of his secretary, permits them to send these documents to the papers, altered in essential particulars from what he read in the House, and to publish letters making further charges against me. I have had a little private correspondence with him, arising from my asking for copies of these documents which he at first would not give me. His tone has not been very friendly, but it is not to him or in the papers that I will defend myself; my defence shall be made in the House where the charges were made. My first step was to write two official letters to Cayley, the one short stating that my duties as auditor were to ask for all necessary information and audit accounts in my own office which a Minister of the Crown who is responsible to the House alone may give or withhold as he pleases on his own responsibility, and showing that I had asked for the information and had not got it. The second entered into details of the particular items which had been the subject of debate, in order that he might be posted up. The first letter was intended to be read in the House, and in it I told him plainly that I wrote it in order that he might defend me. I showed them both to Macdonald who approved of what I had done. Cayley after receiving the letters spoke to me about them and professed to be very indignant at Cauchon, nevertheless he never opened his mouth in the House upon the subject. Macdonald it is true spoke of me in terms of warm personal friendship and told the House that I had only accepted office upon the distinct pledge that I should be quite unfettered in the matter of auditing, but it was not his place to defend me against Cauchon and other Frenchmen who followed in his wake, as he could know nothing of the particulars. It was Cayley's place and as soon as the debate was over I wrote another official letter to him telling him so and asking that he should either do so or intimate to me that my conduct did not admit of defence. I also reminded him that I had pointed out to him as certain to occur exactly what had happened that if the auditor remained in his present position the Inspector General would at every moment be obliged either to disown his own officer for doing his duty or come into collision with his colleagues. That as making the office independent had not met with his approbation the only other escape from the dif-

ficulty was to hold no communication with Members of the Executive except through him and asking for his instructions how I was to conduct the business of the office. (My present intention is to audit the accounts and make such remarks and applications for further information as may be required and send them upstairs to Cayley to sign.) He cannot avoid giving me an answer to this letter, and if he will not undertake my defence in the House I will get a private friend to move for copies of my letters. I am sure I shall be supported in the House, and I am not sorry that the contest has come on as it has. It will perhaps result in making the office what it ought to be and that sooner or later will bring an increase of salary, perhaps it may leave things as they are, and perhaps it may result in my getting an intimation to resign. The three chances are about even, but I have put a bold front on it hitherto and I will fight it out manfully. I know that all the Frenchmen in the ministry without exception are very indignant at me. There are only two members of the ministry that I can really depend upon much, and I know too much of politicians to rely very much upon them if it would inconvenience their own position. Between ourselves my principal dependence is their fears. There is not a man in Canada, except Hincks, that they would be less inclined to see in Parliament than myself, and I have had a few peeps behind the scenes which would enable me to take up a most formidable position against them. However whilst I talk of the ministry it is doubtful whether we have a ministry, and who my chief may be the day after tomorrow I will not undertake to pronounce.

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* May 23, 1856.

Whilst these exciting times have been in progress there has been a little underplot going on which came

to its crisis on Thursday and has resulted in an addition of £200 a year to my income, at least an addition to that extent for two years, and that without any material addition to my work and responsibility. Dr. McCaul[*] the President of University College . . . was our Vice Chancellor. When the time for election came on I was asked to allow myself to be proposed. I consented provided I was not to have any personal canvassing to do and I never spoke to one of the Senate except the man who proposed me, but there was plenty of canvassing and political and all sorts of other influence used to bring people up or keep them away. The result was that almost everybody stayed away and I got four votes and he two. The Chancellor is evidently very indignant, which cannot be helped, but on the other hand the Professors are delighted. No doubt I shall have some extra work, but as the Chancellor, Vice Chancellor and I used to do all the work before, it won't make any very great difference and $400 is not to be despised.

I forget whether I told you the result of Dr Ryerson's affair. Three or four days after his return home he called and entered into a long discussion about his accounts generally and trying to make all sorts of reasons for his large balances and throwing the blame upon the Government and everybody but himself and after a two hours conference he put on his hat to go away and at the door it seemed suddenly to strike him that he had forgotten to speak about the interest. He said that $900 of it was credited in his books to the

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[*] The Rev John McCaul (1807-1887), successively president of King's College, the University of Toronto, and University College Toronto (1853-80). See J King *McCaul, Croft, Forneri* (Toronto, 1914).

Normal school, although he did not give any explanation how it came that he had made no mention of it in the accounts rendered to me. As to the rest he said he thought he had a right to it, and said he had once spoken to Hincks about it, etc., etc. but if I thought it right he would refund it.[*] I said very little in reply and don't mean to say any more, but when he next squares his accounts with me he will find his balance in hand increased accordingly. We are very gracious and I was told that he was very anxious that I should be proposed as Vice Chancellor, but he forgot to come and vote for me.

I am in some doubt whether to send this letter by mail tomorrow or keep it for another week, so as to give the conclusion of the crisis. I think however that anything we may hear during next week will only be the beginning of another crisis so I will not postpone this letter.

Yours etc.,

JOHN LANGTON

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[*] Dr. Ryerson's treatment of his balances as a source of private profit had some warrant in English tradition. It is true that the tradition had been abandoned in England for some hundred years; but tradition dies hard, especially at a distance from the centre of reform. Lecky in his *History of England in the Eighteenth Century*, vol. II, p. 473, (London, 1878) says:—

"On his [i.e. Pitt's] appointment as Paymaster of the Forces in 1746, he at once and for ever established his character by two striking instances of magnanimity. His predecessors had long been accustomed to invest in government securities the large floating balance which was left in their hands for the payment of the troops and to appropriate the interest [and also to receive as a perquisite of office one half per cent. of all subsidies voted by Parliament to foreign princes]. These [two] sources of emolument being united to the regular salary of the office, made it in time of war extremely lucrative, and though they had never been legalized they were universally recognized, and had been received without question and without opposition by a long line of distinguished statesmen."—*W. A. L.*

To his Brother, Wm. Langton

November 9th, 1856

My dear William,

The last letter to you I think left me in the midst of a very pretty quarrel with the Crown Lands Department, which is now happily brought to a close. Having done all I could in the matter I left things to take their chance, throwing the responsibility upon my superiors. From time to time things came in to be audited, upon which occasions I took the opportunity of reporting that I had no materials for an efficient audit, and having put that on record I troubled myself no more about it. But by degrees the materials became more plentiful and the last batch of accounts were so satisfactory all proper vouchers being there, and almost all my suggestions of improvements in the manner of keeping and rendering being adopted, and my remarks upon them were so promptly replied to, that I thought I might go and call at the office personally, which I was the more anxious to do because I had some business of my own there touching a timber license worth more than a hundred pounds, in which I was completely at the mercy of the commissioner or rather his chief clerk of the Woods and Forests who was the individual who was at the bottom of all my differences with the department. We had a very amicable talk over matters of account, and when I introduced my own affairs the clerk was sent for and ordered to prepare my license. Since then most of the former deficiencies have been by degrees sent in, and further suggestions of reforms have been acceded to, so that I may consider that department as fairly brought to a satisfactory state as far as auditing is concerned. The subs are evidently very glum, but the result is altogether satisfactory enough. The old quarrel may therefore be considered almost amongst the things that were and therefore the papers relating to it which I send you have lost part of their interest, nevertheless I send them

In the meantime I have been constantly at Cayley✓ about other reforms, sometimes verbally and sometimes by written reports but he is altogether impracticable and immoveable. He can see nothing but difficulties, and if he does agree with you he is afraid of doing anything for fear of offending somebody Latterly I have given up attempting to make anything of him and do not see him for weeks together Whenever I have cause to recommend any change or to remark upon anything wrong I put on record a written report but I never allude to the subject verbally unless he begins it, and never expect (and therefore am not disappointed) any action on his part Being determined however that I would clear myself from any imputation of negligence I determined to put my representations in a more formal shape, and therefore prepared about half a dozen memoranda in which I entered into detail upon a great many subjects where some action is required which I submitted to the Board of Audit and had them recorded on our minutes and got the Board to assent to a minute embracing the heads of the memoranda This with the memoranda themselves I sent to Cayley and took care that the other ministers should know of its existence That is nearly two months ago and I never have had the smallest conversation with Cayley upon the subject, but I saw the document lying on the Governor General's table the other day and I can perceive the minute bearing fruit.

Whilst the Crown Lands, where there is really nothing very wrong except a most complicated and inefficient system of account-keeping which they have inherited from bygone days, kicked up a great fuss about my very inoffensive remarks, the Board of Works, where everything is wrong and corruption of the grossest kind prevails, treated me with the greatest suavity but offered a most effectual passive resistance to an audit. I used to remonstrate about once a fortnight in a letter to Cayley, which no doubt went into the pigeon hole; but the Board of Works ignored the existence of the Audit Office. At last I wrote him a letter, enumerating all the letters I had at different times written to him and to the Board of Works, and saying that I could do no more and should await his instructions for the future. I took it to him when I knew Joe Morrison * was with him, and so the question was discussed, subsequently brought before Council, and they valiantly resolved that if the accounts were not sent in they would dismiss the book-keeper. Now the chief commissioner is a very polite Frenchman who knows and cares nothing about public works or accounts but has the task assigned to him in the present ministry of keeping in good humour the Quebec section of the Lower Canadians, besides some private interest in feeding a certain Baby, a great contractor, through whose hands from £100,000 to £200,000 of public money pass annually and of whom I have always observed that wherever his name appears the only vouchers I can find are that he got the money (which I can very well believe), but as to whether justly or not the docu

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* *Supra*, note page 257

ments are almost silent. Then there is the Assistant Commissioner or non-political head—a jolly fellow brought out by Lord Sydenham. And thirdly there is the Secretary who physiognomically bears a great resemblance to a cat shamming to be asleep, and his actions do not belie his face. Lemieux receives you with the greatest suavity (and he really is a very pleasant man) he assents to the justness of everything you say; but he does not profess to know anything about details and refers you to Killaly. Killaly is also a most agreeable man, he is quite shocked at the irregularity in the department but he is only an engineer, he never meddles with anything else, he knows no more about accounts than he does of politics and refers you to Mr Begley. Mr Begley is not an agreeable man, his situation is a very unpleasant one, he is only a servant, he writes letters as he is instructed, and if he is instructed to send accounts he will do so, but he is only a servant and you must speak to Mr Lemieux or Killaly. So they wisely determined to dismiss the book keeper who came into office about six months ago and inherited books which they never tried to balance for a great many years and naturally have failed to accomplish now. But the book-keeper fortunately can show that the accounts for the quarter ending 30th April were made out several months ago, but Mr Begley told him not to send them till further orders. This occurred about a month ago, nevertheless I did not get that quarter's accounts till yesterday and from a cursory glance I can see that they are very incomplete. It is pretty clear that we must have a fight before long and I am preparing for it.

In other respects I get along pretty well. The only other fight which I told you of, with Dr Ryerson, has ended in a truce. I have done my duty in reporting the malversation, and at the end of each quarter in reporting on his accounts I call his attention to the £1,800 I have charged him with for interest received, to which in his reply he alludes in some such sentence as this, "The remaining observations will form the subject of another communication," which never comes. I am also industriously reducing his balance by refusing his applications for more money, against which he loudly remonstrates. John Macdonald acknowledged that they ought to dismiss him but they dare not. I should be sorry for that for he is an useful man, but I think their courage might extend to making him disgorge.* Perhaps, when Parliament meets, of two dangers they may choose the least. In other respects we get along smoothly enough. A man who is willing to work generally gets plenty to do, and they have commenced referring all sorts of things to me which do not strictly belong to my department. Amongst other things they have gradually got into the way of sending down applications for warrants to me for report, which Cayley always objected to at first. I think it is more correct that I should report whether a payment is authorized before it is made than afterwards, but there are difficulties. An order in council must necessarily be authority enough for me and precludes my enquiring whether the order in council is founded on just grounds, but if I report upon a claim for money it is evidently not very easy for them to pass an order contrary to my report. Sometimes too an application is referred to me after the order in council has passed, when I have to interpret it—no very easy thing sometimes. In both these cases it occasionally happens that my report is not what they want it to be altogether, and it comes back to me with an unofficial intimation that they want the report altered. It is treading on ticklish ground sometimes. I have modified the report sometimes and I have refused to alter it, but I generally get out of the difficulty by submitting to Council whether it should be so or so, or submitting whether they meant so or so, and in almost all these cases I have found that they decide according to my original report. It is one thing to do a questionable act at once without explanation and another to decide between two courses pointed out to you.

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* This did occur in 1858, according to the *Globe's* review of the Ryerson case in the issue of January 28, 1859 (daily). Other references to the case may be found in the *Globe*, in the weekly editions of May 28, June 4, and June 11, 1858, and in the daily editions of March 3 and March 22, 1859, and February 22, 1860.

I have been thinking of striking for wages. I have raised the salary of all my clerks. I engaged Mr. Cruse at £300 but I am so much pleased with him that in June I raised him to £350 and the other day (that being the limit of my authority), recommended him for £400. I think I am worth £750.

My next great trouble is the University. When I was made Vice-Chancellor I considered the salary as clear gain, and it is pretty nearly so because I should have worked nearly as hard for nothing. But one way or another it takes up nearly half my time and brings me somewhat unpleasantly into collision with people with whom I don't want to collide. We are acting under a most iniquitous law by which Government constituted itself the guardian of the University and they administer our funds and property without the slightest regard to the interests of their ward. It is a little fund—a *little* fund indeed—of which Parliament knows nothing and which has nothing to do with the provincial revenue. Just at this present moment they are improving some property of Cayley's mother in law with our money, and I am going to write to-night a formal remonstrance upon the subject to His Excellency as visitor. He sees the evil and keeps saying that we must be made independent of governments, but he himself is always interfering in the paltriest details. It was only yesterday, because the Senate would not get him out of a scrape which he got into by interfering beyond his province, that he was so cross and snappish with me that in anybody but a Governor General it would have been called ungentlemanly. However I must put off the University to another time.

Yours, etc.

JOHN LANGTON

A LETTER ABOUT UNIVERSITY AFFAIRS

A LETTER ABOUT UNIVERSITY AFFAIRS

Toronto, Nov. 12, 1856.

Before entering into my own position in University matters I think I must give you a sketch of its history. It originated in our energetic old Bishop,* who, when land was comparatively a drug, got together an endowment which, after being for twenty five years and more a perfect mine of wealth for speculators, is worth now little if anything short of £500,000. The University park of 150 acres in Toronto is even now worth £1,000 an acre, and what it may reach eventually no man can tell, though I hope it will never be sold. Besides this we have a great deal of valuable land in all parts of the Province, unsold and unproductive, and an income from rents and investments of upwards of £15,000 a year. About 1840, when Church of Englandism became less fashionable, King's College was legislated out of the Bishop's hands and passed through many phases, but the greatest change was in 1847. The endowment having even then become valuable, an effort was made to have it divided. There was to be a central University and local denominational Colleges were to get a share of the funds. This was the conservative doctrine, but Baldwin† always stuck out for the integrity of the institution and, as his party came in about that time with an overwhelming majority, Can ada presented the astonishing sight of a nation voting against their individual interests and each denomination refusing to take a share of the plunder. Baldwin's bill converted King's College into the University of Toronto, an absolutely godless institution according to the pietists. A very few years however proved the bad working, not of his conception, but of his machinery. The convocation was not a numerous body enough to have much influence, though they had great powers; and the great majority of them had got their degrees in the Bishop's time and seceded to his rival institution Trinity College. The professors who formed the senate found all their time occupied in managing the selling and leasing of the lands and disentangling the immense mass of speculation which had existed. The professors of various branches of medicine were so numerous as to outwit the rest, and they first lowered the other salaries and then raised their own. Before three years the University had got into very bad odour, and had degenerated into a very expensive and very bad medical school. Hincks* now stepped in with a new Act. He abolished convocation and the faculties of Law and Medicine and their host of professors; he assumed the management of the property, and made two corporations out of one, viz. University College, the teaching body, and the University of Toronto, an abstraction for granting degrees to which University College and all the other colleges in the country were supposed to be affiliated, whilst Upper Canada College, a High School, (also an institution of the Bishop's creation with an income of nearly £6,000) lost its corporate existence and was placed under the management of the University. This was all very well in theory, but in practice it has been worse than Baldwin's measure. It is all very well affiliating colleges, but as several of these bodies had charters for conferring degrees it involved the absurdity of affiliating one university to another. None of the colleges got any share of the spoil, which was all they cared for, and we further reduced the link by not making membership of some college necessary to membership of the University. It is somewhat of a novel experiment but I think a very sound one. We admit to degrees, scholarships, etc., anybody who will come up to our standard, which is a very much higher one than any of the local colleges exact or are capable of bringing their students up to. In practice therefore we have but one affiliated college, viz. University College, and yet the Senate (with the exception of myself and two or three others) consists of the heads of these other colleges, who bear us no love and, if they attend at all, do it only to obstruct. It has also had this ill effect, that the really important body, University College, has been thrown entirely into the hands of its President and only representative in our Senate, Dr McCaul.* The professors, who are a body of as good men as any country need wish to possess, are extinguished and Dr McCaul is University College; and as U. Coll. is the real successor of the late University and is maintained out of the same funds with no well drawn line of partition in the purse, he was very near becoming the University also. Then as to the funds—everything is vested in the Queen. We cannot even pay any current expense out of income without a statute to which the Governor[*] considers that he must give an active assent, that is he must consult his council and keep us sometimes six months waiting for the fiat. At least this was his interpretation of his visitational powers at first, but he is beginning to think a passive assent, (reserving to himself the power of disallowing), will be sufficient, and in practice we do spend money without any statute or consulting him at all. As to the principal, we cannot touch that without an order in council placing it at our disposal, and there ought to be a similar order placing parts of our income at our disposal, but as none are ever passed we go on spending as I said before without any formal authority. The whole thing is a mass of confusion. Ordinary current expenses must be paid, and I draw cheques which the bursar pays, and there being no line drawn, Dr McCaul also draws cheques, and as it is often doubtful whether it is an University or a college matter, the bursar, who has to come to me to have his accounts audited, sometimes will pay the Dr.'s cheques and sometimes won't without my signature also. But if the Government are careless of us sometimes and leave a statute for raising a servant's wages £15 a year unsanctioned for six months, and for a year and a half never even acknowledge receipt of our application to have money placed at our disposal for buildings and a library, in other cases they are very attentive to our funds. They ordered the bursar to lend £15,000 to a bankrupt railway, which would have been entirely lost had not another company a year afterwards bought them out and

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* The Right Rev. the Hon. John Strachan (1778-1867), first bishop of Toronto, and first president of King's College, Toronto.

† See note p. 267.

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* See note p. 237

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* See note p. 265

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[*] Sir Edmund Walker Head, Bart. (1805-1868), governor-general of Canada (1854-61). Head had been from 1830 to 1837 a fellow of Merton College, Oxford.

somebody in the House (not having our case in view) put a clause into the Act that they should pay the debts of the bankrupt. We had a lot of land which in consequence of some of the new railways is going to be the site of a village. We have more money than we could or the Government would let us spend, but they ordered the land to be sold for £2,000 whilst four months afterwards it fetched £8,000 and is now probably worth £20,000. But the grossest of all cases was perpetrated immediately after the passing of the Act. Hincks passed another Act authorising the Government to take such portion of the University park as might not be wanted for University purposes for the erection of Parliament Buildings; and the Senate not having been yet appointed, without enquiry what we wanted for University purposes, they forthwith took possession of the whole, turned the College out of its building and transferred them temporarily to the old Parliament houses, and forthwith began draining, road making etc. and, although the plan of Parliament Buildings fell through, the Board of Works continued to spend £10,000 in preparation. When the Government moved here the old Parliament Buildings were wanted, so they wanted to transfer the College to a vacant orphans' asylum, (a more appropriate suggestion) but remonstrances having been made they did add to and fit up the old medical school, (the old college buildings which cost us £15,000 having in the meantime been gutted by the Board of Works and rendered uninhabitable). This was the state of affairs when I came to live at Toronto. The next encroachment of the Government was opening a road through the park, without the common courtesy of consulting us about it. This led to a formal remonstrance. Three members of the Senate and three members of the Government met, with the Governor as moderator, and we agreed to a memorandum that our application for money to build, etc., should be answered (after a year and a half), which it was, and they gave us £75,000 for the buildings and £20,000 for the library; that they should hand over to us all the park west of the avenue, which they also did, reserving to themselves the other fifty* temporarily till it was decided where the seat of Government was to be, when it was also to be given up if not wanted for Parliament Buildings; and lastly that they should do nothing to this other half in the meantime without consulting us. It has been decided by a solemn vote of Parliament that the seat of Government shall not be at Toronto; nevertheless they won't give up the east half, though we wanted it for the site of our new buildings (which I am glad of, for it was a bad site); and, without any notice to us and in spite of our remonstrances, they fitted up the old college buildings (which we wanted to pull down and use the materials) as a lunatic asylum, enclosing about twenty acres of our park and to add insult to injury the official designation is *The University Lunatic Asylum.* This was the feather that broke Blake's† back and he resigned the Chancellorship. The nominal feather at least, for I suspect he had other reasons.

This is a very long story, but it is necessary for you to understand my position. The University itself has hardly a friend in the country and many enemies. The Church looks upon us as godless, and *perhaps* would have no objection to a slice of the endowment. The Methodists, the next most powerful body with Ryer son[*] at their head, make no secret of their hatred and their aspirations for a share of the money. The Church of Rome professes to be friendly, but though some of our more active members of the Senate are Catholic it is observable that we never have had one Catholic student. The Church of Scotland has an University of its own which is very poor and very inefficient, which may lead one to suspect how the wind blows though they are too cautious to express an opinion. The only powerful sect with us is the Free Church to which may be added some Baptists, Independents and other small fry. The Law[†] ignores our degrees except those in Arts, and the leading members of the bar are not churchmen. Medicine is against us almost to a man, for the dissatisfied professors are establishing private schools and fear a restoration of the faculty. Baldwin and his friends stand aloof and prophecy evil of us. Of the five Upper Canada Ministers, three don't conceal their desire to divide the endowment, and one is too insignificant to have an opinion or to give it weight if he had one. The governor general is about the best friend we have but he is a very difficult man to deal with and brings old country notions to apply where they will not fit. A governor general is a trump card certainly but in some respects the least reliable card in the pack, first because he must do after all what his ministry wants and he can never tell from day to day who they may be, and secondly because from his position he acts upon very imperfect knowledge of facts one day ridiculously alarmed at some noisy newspaper editor and the next day earwigged by you know not whom. This is certainly not a very flourishing state for an university and my own position in it does not make it better Here am I a perfect stranger in Toronto come suddenly amongst them to upset old established ways and men, not loved much you may depend upon it by Dr. McCaul and looked upon with suspicion at any rate by Blake and his friends, brought into constant collision with the Government whose servant I am, and with nobody to back me except the professors who from hatred of McCaul stick to me like bricks but without much power, and half a dozen very worthy Baptist Independent and Presbyterian parsons who enable me to carry a majority in the Senate. I have nobody to consult with, for my parsonic allies are quiet men who don't like any more responsibility than is involved in a vote and the professors very wisely don't like appearing openly in the troubled waters. It has been a very difficult card to play even if I had succeeded to the helm in smooth water, but to take the command in a storm is nervous work You may easily imagine from what I have said before that the ship is not in the very best order or the crew much to be relied on, but you cannot conceive unless you saw it the utter state of confusion in which everything is. I must put things into some order and in doing so I cannot help at every step treading on somebody's toes Dr McCaul is no doubt a first rate scholar and a very clever man and he has one element fitting him for command, that whether it is by bullying or by compromising or by artful countermining he never loses sight of the main object—to have his own way in the end; but he is absolutely deficient in the talent of order. Partly perhaps it is design. The end he always keeps in view, the means he is quite unscrupulous about, and provided a thing will serve his turn in the end he cares not for its being suitable to the present state of affairs. No matter how heterogeneous or inconsistent with each other the materials may be, if he has or thinks he has the clue by which he can fit each of them into some place in his proposed building they will serve his turn. You may think I am prejudiced against the man because we have been brought into rivalry, but I formed my opinion of him very early in the day and those that know him best entertain the same. Whilst I was writing the previous page I had a visit from Dr. Wilson * one of our professors and, the conversation turning on McCaul, he warned me for the fiftieth time to beware of him and he added:—if he opposes you you may be safe enough by fighting it out, but if ever he entirely agrees with you and appears to go cordially with you, beware, he will trip you up if he can. I omitted one trait of McCaul's—when a man has such complicated plans on his hands he can rarely be certain what turn things may take and he very rarely commits himself so far to an opinion that he cannot withdraw from it or does a thing so effectually that it cannot be undone. If he does not see clearly how it will work in, he had rather do nothing and wait the course of events. Blake on the other hand was as determined in gaining his object, but he went straight to it regardless of any obstacles. He was very imperious and hard working and wanted not only to do everything his own

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† See note p. 255

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[*] The Rev. Egerton Ryerson, superintendent of education.

[†] I mean the profession who, whilst admitting people to practice in two years less who have our degree in Arts, take no notice of our degrees in Law. I don't know what the use of them is. The examination is very absurd, being all on questions of practice and detail whilst it ought to be upon first principles, but I am in hot water enough without attempting to meddle with Blake's programme of law studies. [J.L.]

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* Daniel (afterwards Sir Daniel) Wilson (1816-1892) professor of history and English literature in the University of Toronto (1853-92) and president of University College (1881-92)

way but to do it himself, and as his duties in Chancery left him little leisure he left things undone or half done, or what was worse, to be finished by McCaul. These two men had the entire management of everything and a pretty mess they made of it. Things had got to such a pass, there was such a want of system, that I *had* to undertake a reform. There is hardly a thing that was done which I have not had more or less to undo, and that with the greatest difficulty in finding out what was the former practice. Blake was ill after his resignation and is now in England; the professors have always been studiously kept in the dark by McCaul, and McCaul himself impenetrable. Some little I can glean from the registrar and bursar, but I am compelled to tread on their toes too. They have been very cordial with me, for they hate McCaul, but the bursar's office stops more than £3,000 a year out of our £15,000, which I want to reform, and the registrar is the bursar's son-in-law. The deeper I search the more I find confusion pervading everything. The monetary system or rather no system is radically bad; the limits of the College and University authority almost undefined, the very course of instruction or rather examination has to be entirely remodelled (here the professors can really assist me with advice and they never were consulted or their views properly placed before the Senate, whilst McCaul is a classical scholar and nothing more). In this branch of my reforms I find very great difficulty, for though I think I can carry my changes with some compromises I cannot help seeing that my parsonic friends whilst voting with me have some doubts whether I am really competent to upset a whole system and build up a new one in opposition to McCaul who has been a fellow or a president of a college all his life, and I can well excuse them for I have considerable doubts myself. Another change I have had to make which is anything but popular with the students. We had a much larger income than sufficed for our wants and, proceeding upon the plan that anything we left would be snapped up by others and only sharpen their appetite, we spent in some things most lavishly, granting scholarships and prizes without limit, so that it was the exception rather than the rule if a student had not a scholarship or half a dozen prizes. But now we have not only very much increased our expenses in other ways but we are about to spend on buildings, library and museum near £100,000 from our capital, and to enable our income thereby reduced to meet necessary expenses we must cut off the superfluities. I therefore attacked the prizes and scholarships, and succeeded in reducing the latter to one third and the former to one-tenth. Upper Canada College has been a great source of trouble. It is a school endowed with about £6,000 a year of public money, and it is without exception the worst school I ever saw or heard of. Blake had commenced the attack here, and as a preparatory measure had got the Principal and the worst master pensioned off. How bad is the system, or again I say no system, you may imagine from this one fact. There is a commercial form, viz. boys who do not learn Latin and Greek. Out of nine masters, some of them with £500 or £600 a year, one at £100 a year has been assigned to a class of about fifty in which, on the negative principle of not learning Latin and Greek, are placed boys ranging from ten to eighteen years of age, whatever their qualifications may be in other respects. Blake I say had commenced the attack and had sketched out a very good scheme, which is however in abeyance till we get a new Principal, which we are not likely to do in a hurry I am afraid. Being anxious to get a good man we made his salary £750 which, with his share of the fees and a capital house, firewood, etc. is at least equal to £1,000 a year which is as much as any of the judges get except the Chief Justice and the Chancellor. We also arranged that he was to have charge of the boarding house, which has hitherto been a disgrace to the school and upon which we have been expending this summer £2,000 to £3,000. Now the Governor promised to get us a man and being totally ignorant of the country he told him that he might probably by the boarders raise his income £400 or £500 more. Our man very wisely I think refused to have anything to do with boarding except superintendence and suggested that we might take the profits of the boarding service ourselves and allow him something towards the same sum by fees or some other way. Now if the Principal managed the boarding house, if he was a good manager he might have made something of it though never £400 a year but if we are to manage it we must pay somebody else, for the service what the Principal would have got so we totally declined to make any addition to the salary and the Governor was in a great pet and said he washed his hands of the whole concern. The spending of the money I think I have at last got into a somewhat more satisfactory condition. I have got committees appointed, each regulated by its own statute for the buildings, the grounds, the library, the museum, the observatory (toward which the Government contributes) and Upper Canada College (which has its own funds). All of these have money placed at their disposal from time to time by the Senate and are responsible for the spending of it, instead of the miscellaneous system which formerly prevailed, all centering at last on Dr. McCaul. On these committees I have also placed the best of the professors, which for the first time gives them any proper voice in the management of affairs.

Since I finished the last sheet I think I have got the examination subjects into a more favourable position than I ever succeeded in doing before. Dr. McCaul and I are a committee to arrange details and it is impossible to move him a step. Day after day we meet and talk over the thing—we apparently get a thing settled one day but it has all to be gone over again the next, and he is constantly starting new ideas, merely I believe to create delay. He has already put the thing off so long that we have been obliged to commence a new year on the old system, but I think by stealing two whole days from the office and sitting up to three o'clock in the morning I have at last got things into train and we may get a new system adopted for next year. I often think I am a fool to trouble myself so much about it. What is the University to me that I should bother myself with it? Why can't I take my £200 a year with as little trouble as possible as long as I stay here? But it is not my nature any more than it would be yours and besides I am positively ashamed to see our printed programme, such a mass of absurdity is it. I must in vindication of my folly give you a sample or two and there are many more. We have a department of History and a man at the head of it Dr. Daniel Wilson, well known in Europe as well as here, but his department is really ridiculous. In a five years course he only brings English History down to Henry VII, and there is absolutely no other history except that of

Egypt down to Cleopatra and that of Spain under Ferdinand and Isabella, French and German history going with those languages, which are under the care of a very worthy pudding-headed old Italian to whom they have been assigned upon the principle, which appears to be accepted elsewhere as well as in Canada, that foreign languages are safe in the hands of a foreigner. The foreign language department is also most contemptible which must I am afraid be laid at the door of poor Dr Forneri,* but Dr Wilson is innocent of the shortcomings of history except in as far as it may be a retribution upon him for the holy hatred with which he regards McCaul, a hatred most religiously returned. As examples of the inconsistency of our system I may mention that during the whole course three or four scholarships are assigned to Classics and to Mathematics for one to the Natural sciences, but the last year, when we end with five gold medals, two are given to the Natural Sciences and only three amongst all the rest of the departments. Also that, whilst scholarships are confined to men in the first class, there is nothing for the second, and such valuable prizes for the third that I had a man remonstrating the other day at the injustice done to him by the examiner placing him, by mistake he contended, in the first class. We have a department of Metaphysics and Ethics under a most learned and excellent man Dr Beaven.† After the first two years we allow students to exercise options and they may under certain conditions drop Classics but then they must retain Metaphysics, yet

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* James Forneri (1789-1869) professor of modern languages in University College, Toronto (1853-66). See J King op. cit.

† The Rev James Beaven (1801-1875) professor of ethics and metaphysics in King's College, the University of Toronto and University College, Toronto (1842-71).

Dr. Beaven insists upon examining almost altogether from Aristotle, Cicero, etc., and positively requires them to read more Greek and Latin than Dr. McCaul himself. I argue in vain but I will have my own way in this case, Dr. McCaul assenting and delighted to see me getting into trouble with Dr. Beaven, and the Dr., who in former days on account of Clergy Reserve heresies had told me he looked upon me as little less than a heathen, now plainly intimates that I am also one of the unlettered.

The buildings have been a terrible source of trouble all summer. Money, site, style, plan, elevation, architect's pay, have all been the subject of endless discussion and annoyance. We got the money in Blake's day, but the Governor General seems to think that he is personally responsible for the expenditure and is always interfering, now making light of any expenditure which hits his fancy at the moment and ignoring all difficulty as to squaring our expenses to our reduced income from otherwise appropriated capital, and now over come with a niggardly fit. The battle of the site too was fought in Blake's day and helped to his defeat for both he and the architect were tempted by a site at the end of a fine avenue nearly a mile long. St. Peter's would look magnificent there, but anything we could build would be but a mushroom at that distance and we should have had to have sacrificed convenience to great elevation. I was not sorry when the lunatic asylum blocked us out from that ground, for we have a beautiful site elsewhere. From this time my troubles commenced. Blake proposed to make me the building committee but I declined unless he and Chief Justice

Draper * were associated with me, promising to do all the work. I had not sufficiently calculated upon Blake's desire to do everything himself, whilst between Chancery and the government he could do nothing. However we took ample powers, and for two valuable months after Cumberland returned † we did nothing. After Blake's resignation I had it all to myself, for Draper does not want to interfere and never does unless I ask his advice, and unless it had been in one man's hands we never could have got along at all. The site being chosen Cumberland drew a first sketch of a Gothic building, but the Governor would not hear of Gothic and recommended Italian, showing us an example of the style, a palazzo at Sienna which, if he were not Governor General and had written a book on art, I should have called one of the ugliest buildings I ever saw. However after a week's absence the Governor came back with a new idea, it was to be Byzantine; and between them they concocted a most hideous elevation. After this the Governor was absent on a tour for several weeks during which we polished away almost all traces of Byzantine and got a hybrid with some features of Norman, of early English, etc., with faint traces of Byzantium and the Italian palazzo, but altogether a not unsightly building and on his return His Excellency approved. When our Government were taunted in the House with their want of policy and unnatural alliance of parties and they were asked whether they called themselves a conservative or a reform or a coalition ministry, one of them replied that they

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* The Hon. William Henry Draper (1801-1877), chief justice of the court of Common Pleas in Upper Canada (1856-63), and chief justice of Upper Canada (1863-77).

† From England, where he had gone in connection with preparations for the designing of the building.

called themselves the Government of Canada. So we, if asked after the style of our building, may call it the Canadian style; and to an uncritical eye it is a very respectable and rather imposing structure, or will be, but the various breeds which entered into its composition have cropped out in somewhat different proportions in its two principal facades. Concurrently with this of course the plan was progressing, and as the College is also to be accommodated I had to consult its authorities. It has evidently been a sore with McCaul that he has nothing to say to the building, but as I have got absolute power here I will keep it. However I had to ask them to appoint a committee to confer with me and he made a last great effort to consider it a joint building committee, but not being backed by the Professors I escaped that rock. Their demands for space were however outrageous and at last it was only by telling them, as the Governor authorized me to do, that if they did not moderate their expectations he would stop the building altogether that I succeeded in making a compromise. I shewed the plan to the Governor who was in a very bad temper that morning, hardly looked at it, assented, and went on his tour, so the elevation was completed in accordance and I advertised for tenders. When he came back and the whole thing was submitted to him, he counted up the lecture rooms, stormed at our extravagance, and said he would stop the whole thing. However I evaded that difficulty by scratching out the word lecture room and erasing all appearance of seats for the students, when he said it was much more sensible, so we proceeded to stake out the ground. But here an unexpected difficulty arose. It seems that His Excellency had all along thought that the South front was to face the East [West?], and nothing would satisfy him but so it must be and under his superintendence we proceeded to measure and stake out. Cumberland's[*] face exhibiting blank despair for it brought his chemical laboratory where no sun would ever shine into it, his kitchens, etc., into the prettiest part of the grounds, and several other inconveniences which His Excellency said could be easily remedied. However there stands on the ground an elm tree, a remnant of the old forest, with a long stem as such trees have and a little bush on the top of it, not unlike a broom with its long handle stuck into the ground, and it soon became evident that the tree would fall a sacrifice. This he would not permit and when I hinted that it would certainly be blown down before long, he told me it was the handsomest tree about Toronto (as it certainly is one of the tallest), and politely added "but you Canadians have a prejudice against trees." He then stalked off the ground followed by his A.D.C. I thought Cumberland would have thrown the whole thing up that day, he was so annoyed, but we took up the stakes and staked it out our way with the South front facing the South and by a little stuffing and squeezing we got the tree into such a position that it may be saved but with the almost certainty that when it is blown down it will take some of the students' quarters with it. It is some comfort that that will occur before Tom[†] is old enough to go to college or I should be uneasy in stormy nights. However I bless that tree and hope its shadow may never be less for it got us out of [the] scrape. When the Governor paid us a visit next day he was quite satisfied and complimentary, and in congratulating us upon the safety of the tree he said to Cumberland with that impertinence which governors general can so well indulge in "For I am sure you can never put anything up half as pretty." That day I met John Macdonald in the street who said, "so I hear you have been cutting down the trees," and calling upon Lady Head that afternoon with the ladies she asked "Did you save that tree?"—upon which a smile passed between her and the Aide. The Chief Justice of New Brunswick also, who was there on a visit, was present at the first indignation and suggested that the tree might perhaps be transplanted adding, "did not your Excellency transplant one almost as large at St. John?" The great man muttered something about a failure, from all which I conclude that if we Canadians have prejudices about trees our governors are not quite exempt from the same. This was pretty nearly the last of my troubles about the building. During these interviews and others on other subjects with the Governor I learnt a trick or two about great men. Of course it is very improper to argue with a governor general but I was not bred a courtier and am somewhat inclined to argument But I never do argue in presence of a third person especially before Cumberland against whom it is clear the Governor has a great prejudice. He has often upbraided me for deserting him when we were agreed upon a point But alone I have no such scruples I stick to my point stiffly and often gain it and if I find it prudent to appear convinced I generally can get it accomplished by returning to the subject next day in somewhat a different direction. Hitherto at any rate I have got everything I much cared about my own way except the removal of Upper Canada College on which he is inflexible. With all its endowment it is getting deeper into debt, but it stands on ground worth £50,000 at least, far too confined for its accommodation with proper playgrounds, etc., and on a main thoroughfare where you cannot keep the boys out of mischief; whilst we have ground in abundance in the University park and could put up far better buildings for the money and gain £1,000 a year besides, almost exactly central too to the space and not very far from the centre of the population of Toronto. But Upper Canada College lies almost at his door, and I suppose he thinks that the centre of the world whilst it is really at one corner.

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[*] Lieut.-Col. Frederick William Cumberland (1821-1881) civil engineer and architect.

[†] The writer's eldest son.

You may easily imagine that all these things keep me pretty fully employed. Indeed since my appointment I think the University has taken up fully half my time and much more than half my thoughts. And all for what? For £200 a year you will say. But in two or three years at any rate I shall be moved away and have no further connection with them, even if I remain as long or the University itself continues in existence. Since Blake's resignation they have not been able to get anybody to take the Chancellorship and I am not surprised—at least no one whom they will appoint. Dr McCaul has been moving heaven and earth to be appointed, and as he can play the courtier very well I should not be very much surprised if in the dearth of others he may succeed. That would effectually finish the University. In the meantime however the lawyers say that everything we do is illegal, as our corporation is incomplete and the Governor only verbally agrees to our Statutes and tells us to act on them but does not formally sanction them, intending that we shall pass one general statute including the whole when we have a chancellor. It is not a pleasant position to be in and many members of the Senate are beginning to talk of ceasing attendance altogether. Our contract for the building too is in a curious position. If the Senate does not exist surely it cannot contract, and our Solicitor had great objections to drawing up the contract and told me if I signed it he thought I should be personally liable. However I ran the risk and signed it and affixed the seal of the University, acting by the Chief Justice's advice who said that unless the seal is affixed by fraud no court would refuse to recognise it. Rumour says that we are to have no chancellor but that we are to be left as we are till Parliament meets when there will be a new Act. In any case there will be a new Act, which the Governor is now drawing up. It will restore us the management of our property and make us independent of the Government and reunite or draw closer the bonds between the College and the University. This is as it should be but can he carry it? He says he thinks he can depend upon Lower Canada for support but I doubt, and above all can he depend upon his Government which I doubt more. Once introduce the subject in Parliament and no one can tell how it will come out of it. The whole thing may be legislated away, and most probably I shall. It is disheartening, but what is a man to do. Every stone that goes up in the building, every book that is bought is so much more anchorage and so much less plunder to fight for. It is said so live as if you might die to-morrow, and in this case I try to do the converse, to act as if we were to live for ever. If we survive it is so much gain, if we fall the good we do will not be thrown away altogether, there will probably be some remnant left to benefit by it, or some other man who will have an abuse the less to correct,

A NOTE ABOUT THE CLERGY RESERVES

THE CLERGY RESERVES

[In reply to a request from England for information as to how the Church of England in Canada managed without the Clergy Reserves.]

Ottawa, 29th Oct., 1869

When I was in politics this was a vexed question. Of course as a churchman I was willing enough to have any aid for the church, but in a country like Canada, where we have no established form of religion, where the Church of England is in a decided minority, it would have been manifestly unjust to have a public maintenance for it, and not for other denominations, and however stoutly we had fought for retaining this benefit, it would only have been a question of time and have raised all sorts of ill will amongst us.

I therefore went for the abolition of the Clergy Reserves, being certainly the only Church of England man in the House and nearly the only one in the country that did so. You may imagine that I had hard times of it with our people, without gaining much support from the other side. The arguments which had really convinced me—the injustice of the existing arrangement, and the impolicy of protracting a useless contest—had no weight with my friends, and being hard pressed I boldly argued that the Clergy Reserves, instead of being any real benefit, were a drag upon the progress of the Church of England, and that we should thrive twice as well without them. I well remember a

speech in the House in which I advanced this argument, and brought forward as an instance a township (Dummer) in my own county. About half of it was settled with Presbyterians (Scotch), the other half by Wiltshire men with a sprinkling of northern Irish, who were also for the most part churchmen. The Wiltshire men were very strenuous for having a clergyman sent to them, and argued, not without reason, that if the six-sevenths of the land which they occupied could support them, the other seventh reserved for the clergy ought to provide them with a parson; but not one of them ever dreamt of their paying anything themselves towards his support. From their childhood upward it had appeared to be in the immutable order of things that there should be a parson, and whilst the land was there why need they, who had hard work to live themselves, pay anything? The Scotch, having nothing else to depend on, soon subscribed to have a minister to visit them once a month and then once a fortnight, and finally built him a modest house and had one all to themselves. Wandering Methodists also visited them from time to time, and the Irishmen mostly joined that sect; but the Wiltshire men were very stubborn and never went to church at all. After a while however the young people had to get married and there were children to be christened, and old people to be comforted in sickness and buried, and the Presbyterian minister being at hand they went to him, and ended in becoming regular attendants and subscribing with the rest of the congregation. If there had been no such nominal provision as the Clergy Reserves, I argued, these men would still have belonged to the church. Now you may imagine how satisfactory it was to find that within a year after the Clergy Reserves were secularized, the

JOHN LANGTON

AETAT 70

old Wiltshire men, finding they could no longer rely upon government for anything and taking example from their Scotch neighbours, subscribed and built a very nice little church, had parsonage, and have now a resident clergyman amongst them. But the evil once, done is not so easily undone. They have not got all their Wiltshiremen back from the Presbyterians and very few of the Irish from the Methodists But since 1860 the members of the Church of England have increased in numbers I was told by our former clergyman at Fenelon Falls that in his new country parish near Toronto he had nearly doubled his congregation since the abolition of the Clergy Reserves almost all the new accessions being old churchmen who for want of a regular church had got into the habit of going to the Methodists. After all the abuse which I got in 1854 much of it very hard personal abuse I have lived, to be thanked by more than one clergyman for aiding in conferring a great benefit on the Church. The fact is that there is no denomination so well able to support its clergy as ours and none that did so little till we were thrown on our own resources. It has also had a wholesome effect on the clergy themselves. The laity hold the purse strings, and cannot be altogether set aside as something profane. At a meeting of the Church Society at Quebec some of the parsons were explaining their experiences in extracting money from their congregations One of them, recommending frequency of small contributions instead of larger sums occasionally appealed to me, as having been a farmer whether steady milking was not the best rule to follow I assented as to the milking, but added that I had found good and steady feeding quite as essential, which plan I strongly recommended the assembled parsons to try.

INDEX OF NAMES

Abercrombie, Sir Ralph, 166
Aberdeen 61
Adelaide township, 14, 72, 73
Albany 166
Athill or Atthill, —, 32, 56, 96, 148, 176, 190, 191, 192

Baby, —, 269
Badgley William, 217
Bald lake, 66
Baldwin, Robert, 267 277 278, 279 293
Baldwin, (Colonel) 46
Balsam Canal, 129
Balsam lake 10 11 14, 66 74, 142 155, 176
Bank of Montreal, xxxviii
Bank of Upper Canada, xxxix, 93, 165, 240, 248
Barber, E. C. 282, 283
Barclay (Dr and Mrs.) 176
Beaston, —, 50
Beavan, James, 290, 291
Bedford, —, 22
Beehive The, xv 203
Begley, Thomas A., 279
Belfast, 50
Bellingham, —, 62
Bethune, —, 96, 100, 144
Bettridge, William, 142
Bick, George, 203
Bidwell, —, 162, 171
Birley E., 159
Blake, William Hume, 255 282, 283, 284, 285 286, 287 291 292, 296
Blandford, 66
Blythe xv 120 134, 142, 146, 154, 159, 164, 166, 172, 173 175 182, 189 191 194
Blythe Hall, xiii xiv
Bob-ca-je-won-unk, 43, 56 73, 74, 97, 102, 104, 108, 109. *See also* Bob Cajwin, Bob-cajion-unk and Bobcaygeon
Bob-cajion-unk, 29, 32, 35. *See also* Bobcajewonunk, Bob Cajwin and Bobcaygeon.
Bob Cajwin 8, 14, 17 22, 24, 29 *See also* Bob-cajion-unk, Bobcajewonunk and Bobcaygeon
Bobcaygeon, xxviii, 82 120, 144 146, 152, 166 170 179, 181 182, 204. *See also* Bobcajewonunk, Bob-cajion-unk and Bob Cajwin
Boston, 159, 160
Boswell, George M 167
Botany Bay, xxvi
Bouchette, Robert Shore Milnes, 214
Boyce —, 63
Boyd Mossom, 162, 163 203, 204, 207 209
Bridgenorth 21
Brock, 50
Brown, (Colonel) and family 6, 20, 121 163
Buckhorn lake, 14, 26, 28
Buckhorn rapids, 205, 206
Buffalo, xxxii
Burleigh rapids, 205
Burnt river 12
Bury William Coutts Keppel, Viscount, 212

Caddy, Edward, 104
Cambie, Charles, 231
Cambleton 6, 21
Cambridge, xvi xxxiii, 20
Cameron or Cameron's lake, 12, 20, 42, 59, 73 125, 127 177
Cameron's Falls 8, 9 10, 12, 18, 19, 24, 21, 42, 45, 46, 56, 66, 68, 84, 69 72, 97, 102, 122, 127, 129 137 143, 144, 196, *See also* Fenelon Falls
Campbell, Sir John, 68
Campbellford, 3
Canada Company xxvii, 73

Canadian Historical Review, v
Cartier, Sir George Etienne, 216, 261
Cartwright township, 46
Cary, Joseph, 214
Cauchon, Joseph Edouard, 216, 261, 266
Cayley, William, 213, 214, 215, 217, 218, 222, 226, 230, 237, 241, 247, 255, 257, 259, 262, 263, 264, 265, 269, 271, 273
Cedar Point, 45
Chaffey, Benjamin, 281
Chauveau, Pierre Joseph Olivier, 239
Chemong lake, 7, 10, 14, 17, 21, 104. *See also* Mud lake
Cobourg, 4, 5, 6, 14, 16, 20, 24, 50, 74, 86, 96, 99, 100, 101, 106, 164
Colborne, Sir John, xxvii, 11, 126, 129, 134, 140, 172
Colbourne district, 163, 166
Colonial Advocate, xxii, xxiv
Commercial Bank, 163
Constitution Island, 160, 175
Cook, xxxix, 62
Crane, Bill, 38
Crawford, (Miss), 59
Credit river, xxxi
Cross, Thomas, 230, 231, 266, 272
Cumberland, Frederick William, 293, 294, 295
Cummings, —, 297
Curran, Alice, xv

[illegible] or D'Arcy, —, 49, 50, 62, 60
Davidson (Captain) 166
Dawson, —, 227
Deer Bay *or* lake 38
Dennistoun, Robert, 137, 143, 144, 147, 155, 164, 166, 167, 174, 176, 178, 179, 180, 182, 191
Dennistoun, (Mrs) 179
Dickenson, William, 210, 226, 230, 242
Dobbs (Captain), 98, 126, 127, 156
D'Olier, —, 182
Douro township, xxxix, 7, 124
Draper, William Henry, 202
Drummond, Lewis Thomas, 216
Dublin, 62
Dudley, —, 154
Duff, Grant, 59, 61
Dummer, Township of, 102
Dundas, 79
Dunsford, Hartley, 203
Dunsford, James Hartley, xv, 203
Dunsford, James Wicks, 200, 204, 208
Durham, Lord, xxvii
Durham, County of, 170

Elgin, 19
Elliot, Stephen, 8, 9, 10, 28
Emily township, 48
Erie Canal, 4
Erie, Lake, 14, 80
Erindale, xxxi
Evans, —, 90

Farmers Bank, 163
Fenelon, Township of, 18, 25, 31, 50, 63, 72, 75, 79, 87, 103, 119, 127, 134, 138, 176
Fenelon Falls, xv, 5, 72, 167, 174, 175, 178, 179, 185, 192, 196. *See also* Cameron's Falls
Ferguson, —, 99, 119, 120, 126
Fisher, Janet, 72, 176, 177
Fisher, (Judge), 177
Fitchett, Abraham, 109, 114, 116, 117
Five Nations Indians, 125. *See also* Mohawk Indians
Forbes, Robert Millar, 72
Forneri, James, 250
Fortune, J. R., 115
Fortune, Thomas, 168, 170
Fortye, —, 128
Foster —, 176
Frazer or Fraser, (Mr or Mrs), 59, 62, 104, 105, 109, 155, 166

Gilchrist, John, 167
Glasgow, 167
Glenelg, Lord, 186
Globe, 271
Glyn, Mills and Company, 219
Gordon, Robert, 48, 49, 52, 64, 131
Gore District, xxxix
Grand Trunk Railway Company, 219, 248, 257
Grant, W. L., xix, xxv, xxix, xxx, xxxii

Greene, —, 261
Gray, —, 115, 117
Griffin, —, 176, 177

Haskett, —, 156
Haig, —, 132
Hall, Basil, 7
Hall, —, 71, 130
Hamilton, xxxix, 69, 73
Hamilton, Gavin, 164, 167, 174, 176, 177, 182
Hamilton, Robert, 144, 155, 164
Hamilton, William, 144
Hamilton, (Major) and family, 122, 126, 136, 137, 138, 142, 143, 144, 146, 147, 153, 156, 166, 176, 177
Harvey township, 50, 126
Hay, (Lieutenant), 37, 38, 39, 40, 41, 42, 43, 60
Head, Sir Edmund Walker, xvi, 213, 259, 298
Head, Sir Francis Bond, 160, 162, 171, 172, 190, 199
Head, Lady, 295
Heywood, Sir Benjamin, xv, 179
Heywood, Messrs B., and Co., 179, 182, 191
Hincks, Sir Francis, 227, 252, 264, 266, 278
Hodgins, John George, 251, 252, 253
Howard, 6, 21
Howison, John, xix, xxiii, xxvi, xxxi, xxxv, xxxvii
Hudson river, 4
Hudson River and Oswego Canal, 140
Hudson's Bay Company, 156
Hughes, —, 69, 71
Hunter, Joseph, 16, 17, 18, 49, 50
Huron, County of, 213
Huron, Lake, 18

Illinois, 143

James, —, 128, 129
Jameson, Anna Brownell, xix, xxiv, xxix, xxx, xxxi, xxxii, xxxiii, xxxiv, xxxix
Jameson, Robert Sympson, xxxiv
Jameson, —, 9, 24, 43, 44, 45, 50, 54, 56, 57, 61, 62, 63, 69, 70, 72, 73, 80, 100, 109, 117, 128, 131, 135, 136, 138, 141, 144, 145, 152, 154, 165, 175, 178, 180, 181

Kawartha lakes, 4
Kennedy, W. P. M., xix
Killaly, Hamilton Hartley, 270
Kinashgingiquash, Lake, 16
King, John, 265, 290
King, —, 50
King's College, xxxii, xxxiii, 277, 278
Kingston, xxxv, xxxvii, 28, 160, 172, 173, 176, 213
Kirkpatrick, Sir George Airey, 166
Kirkpatrick, Stafford Frederick, 166, 169, 174, 176, 177
Kirkpatrick, Thomas, 166
Kirkpatrick, (Mrs. S. F.), 174, 177

Lakefield, 48
Langevin, —, 287
Langton, Anne, vi, ix, xiv, xv
Langton, Lydia, xv
Langton, Thomas, xiii, xiv, xv
Langton, William, v, xiii, xiv, xv, 65, 179, 182
Lecky, William Edward Hartpole, 268
Lemieux, François Xavier, 265, 270
Lennox and Addington, County of, 171, 177
Lisbon, 61
Liverpool, xiii, xiv, 3, 9, 11, 36, 59, 61, 62, 67, 112, 154, 156
London, 101, 130
London (Canada West), xxxix
London District, 66
Londonderry, 62
Long Island, 100

McAndrew, Alexander, 17, 18, 19, 27, 29, 32, 40, 43, 44, 45, 46, 47, 48, 49, 50, 51, 56, 57, 58, 59, 60, 61, 64, 65, 67, 68, 69, 70, 76, 82, 83, 84, 93, 94, 96, 97, 105, 106, 107, 108, 109, 112, 119, 126, 127, 130, 132, 134, 137, 138, 139, 140, 142, 144, 145, 146, 147, 148, 150, 153, 164, 165, 166, 179, 180, 182

McCall, —, 69, 71, 76, 79, 80, 82, 84, 94, 96, 99, 105, 107, 109, 129, 145
McCaul, John, 265, 279, 280, 284, 285, 286, 289, 290, 291, 293, 294
McConnell, —, 48, 174, 175
McCue. *See* McQue
Macdonald, Sir John Alexander, 213, 216, 217, 248, 257, 259, 268, 271, 285
McDonell, Alexander, 19, 87, 98, 131, 167, 168, 170, 173
McGregor, John, xix
McGue. *See* McQue
McInnes, —, 117
Mackenzie, William Lyon, xxiii, xxiv, 151, 162, 167, 179, 214, 244
McKue, Billy, 17
Maclaren, (Major), 72, 165
MacMullen, John, xix
McNab, Sir Allan Napier, 256, 257, 258, 259, 260
McQue, Billy, 88, 106, 115, 120
McQue, James, 17, 20, 83
Macredie, Thomas, 137, 144, 145, 153, 154, 155, 164, 165, 167, 171
Macredie, William A., 69, 70, 71, 74, 78, 79, 80, 84, 92, 94, 97, 98, 102, 107, 108, 109, 114, 115, 117, 118, 129, 130, 134, 137, 144, 145, 146, 153, 154, 155, 164, 165
Magrath, T. W., xix, xxii, xxvi
Manchester, xv, 11, 103
Manchester and Salford Bank, xv
Mariposa township, 60
Mavor, James, xix, xxii, xxiv
Meilleur, Jean Baptiste, 259, 262
Menzies, John, 142, 164, 166, 168
Merino, 72
Mersey river, 97
Michigan, xxv, 196
Miles, Robert S., 195
Mississauga Indians, 76, 125
Mohawk Indians, 20, 124, 125, 126
Montreal, xxii, xxxv, 14, 61, 65, 72, 75, 76, 101, 198, 202, 216, 231
Moore, 46
Monson, John, 59, 61
Morris, William, 215
Morrison, Joseph Curran, 257, 259, 260
Mud lake, 7, 21, 27, 48, 137, 167, 176. *See also* Chemong lake
Mudge, —, 37, 39, 50

Need, Thomas, 8, 10, 14, 16, 19, 32, 34, 39, 43, 46, 49, 50, 57, 62, 106, 109, 128, 129, 133, 134, 144, 145, 153, 168, 176, 179, 180, 182, 190
Newcastle District, 4, 5, 11, 12, 14, 35, 60, 95, 130
New York, 3, 4, 104, 159, 160, 180, 182
Niagara and Niagara Falls, xxxi, 9, 24, 26, 76, 79, 80, 82, 172
Nicholls, —, 202, 203
Nagy, *Captain*, 25, 26

O'Flynn, Daniel, 46, 47, 49, 60
Ohio, xxxi, 76, 88
Oliphant, Laurence, 213
Ontario, Lake, 14, 24, 70, 98, 130
Ops township, 3, 14, 47, 48, 57, 109, 152
Ormskirk (Lancashire), xii
Oswego, 4, 160
Otonabee river, 5, 21, 25, 128, 168, 170
Ottawa, 201
Oxford, xxxiii, 62

Parry, —, 84
Patterson, James, 225
Perry, Peter, 168, 176
Pestalozzi, Heinrich, xiv
Peterborough, vi, ix, xv, xvi, xxxv, xxxix, 4, 5, 6, 7, 11, 14, 17, 19, 21, 24, 25, 26, 28, 30, 32, 34, 36, 38, 39, 43, 49, 50, 51, 52, 55, 56, 57, 60, 62, 64, 70, 71, 72, 75, 82, 95, 96, 98, 99, 104, 105, 107, 109, 118, 119, 120, 121, 129, 130, 131, 132, 133, 136, 137, 138, 140, 141, 142, 144, 146, 147, 150, 155, 160, 162, 164, 166, 167, 168, 169, 170, 172, 173, 175, 177, 180, 181, 182, 183, 191, 198, 202, 203, 206, 204, 207, 209

Peterborough, County of, xvi
Peterborough *Gazette*, 253
Philadelphia, 159
Pickering, 80
Pigeon creek, 48
Pigeon lake 8, 14, 17 22, 26, 164–165
Plains, The, xxxix, 182
Port Hope 74
Port Hope Canal, 74, 78
Prescott, xxxv
Providence, 160
Purdon (Captain) 186
Purdy —, 48, 70, 91 92, 96, 107 147 181

Quebec, xxiii, xxvii, 182, 202, 204 207 209, 212, 219, 303
Quinté, Bay of, 14, 21

Rabeldge, —, 154
Reilly —, 117
Rice lake 4, 6, 14, 21, 24, 74, 98, 168 170
Richards, Sir William Buell, 237
Rideau Canal, xxiv xxxviii
Rideout, —, 265
Riga, xiii
Rivière du Loup, 216
Robinson Sir John Beverley xxix, xxxiii
Robinson, Peter xxxix, 160, 172
Rochester 77 79
Rokeby 12, 48 166
Ross John, 257
Royal Standard, xxxii
Ruttan, Henry 167 170
Ryerson, Egerton 223, 226, 227, 229 242, 249, 250 251, 252, 253 254, 255, 265 266, 270 271, 303

St. Albans, 26
St. Catharines, xxxix
St. Lawrence river, 30, 246
Sandy lake, 14, 37 48
Sandy Point, 46
Sawbridge, —, 173
Sawers, (Captain) 5, 10, 17 30 33, 34 50, 62, 104, 145, 174
Schenectady 140
Scott, Adam, xxxix, 126
Scott's Plains. *See* Plains, The
Scugog lake, 131
Scugog river 8, 36, 47 48, 70, 88, 97 119
Selby 43
Shairp, (Major) 188
Shaw —, 168, 169
Shirreff Patrick, xxx, xxviii, xxxviii xxxix, xl, 148
Simcoe Lake 13, 14, 19, 74, 120, 121 174
Smith Sir Henry 259
Smith William, 15
Smith —, 126
Spence Robert, 242, 259
Spoke Island 152
Sprague, —, 227
Stewart, Frances, xix, xxx, xxxix, xl, 7 17
Stewart, Thomas Alexander 6, 7 100 104, 176
Strachan, John xxxiii 172 186, 277
Stuart, (Captain) [illegible]
Stuart, Mr *See* Stewart, Thomas Alexander
Sturgeon lake, xv, xxvii, xxxiv 4, 8, 14, 22 25 27, 36, 58, 74, 103, 104, 145, 152, 256
Sturgeon Point, 18, 19 31, 97 159
Sully 21, 167 168, 169 170
Sydenham, Lord, 270

Taché, Sir Etienne Pascal 218, 259, 290
Talbot river 129
Tarbutt, —, 144
Thompson, Samuel, xix, xxx
Toronto, xvi xxx, xxxi xxxii xxxiii, xxxv xxxix, 4, 84 86 97 98, 99, 101, 136, 137 157 166, 173 192, 215, 217 230, 242, 277 290 292, 294, 296 303. *See also* York
Toronto, University of, xvi xxxviii, 277-297 *passim*
Traill, Catherine Parr xix, xxvi, xxxv, xxxvi, xxxvii xxxix, xl
Traill, (Lieutenant) xxxv xxxvi
Trent river 14, 21 200
Trent Valley Canal, xxv 11 74, 129, 131 138

Trinity College, 278
Troy, 4
Tupper, —, 23

U E Loyalists, xxv, xxix, 15, 225
University College, 277-297 *passim*
Upper Canada College, xxxiii, 278, 287, 288, 295, 298

Uragandire, 125
Uxbridge, 30

Vankoughnet, Philip Michael, 258
Vansittart, Henry, xxxiii, 143, 158
Verulam, 4, 15, 22, 25, 32, 58, 66, 126, 184
Victoria, County of, xvi, 302

Wade, (Rev Mr), 191, 192, 194
Wallace, W Stewart, v, xix, xxx
Wallis, James, 69, 71, 72, 76, 78, 80, 95, 134, 135, 164, 165, 166, 167, 168, 169, 172, 174, 176, 177, 178, 179, 182, 188, 189, 190, 191, 192
Walsh, (General), 69
Work, —, 119, 120, 121
Warren, (Captain), 56, 68
Waterloo, xxv, 164
Welland Canal, xxxv, xxxix
West Bay, 13
Whitby, 34. *See also* Windsor
Wilson, Alexander, xxxi
Wilson, Sir Daniel, 285, 289, 296
Wilson, —, 62, 69, 96
Windsor, 80, 181. *See also* Whitby
Woodstock, xxxiii, 150
Woolwich, 56

York, xxvii, xxviii, xxxii, xxxviii, 4, 6, 11, 14, 26, 68, 73, 80, 93, 119. *See also* Toronto
Young, John, 247
Yverdon, xiv

146

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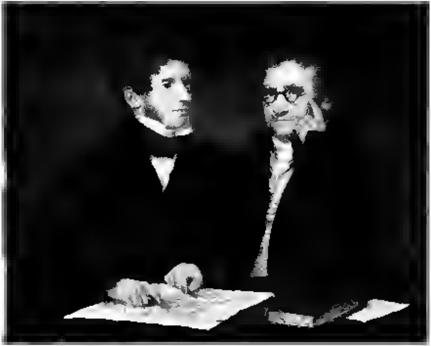

John Langton and His Principal Correspondent

From a miniature painted in 1833

From a miniature painted in 1833

EARLY DAYS IN UPPER CANADA

LETTERS OF JOHN LANGTON

from the Backwoods of Upper Canada and the Audit Office of the Province of Canada

EDITED BY W A LANGTON

206347 / 13 10. 26

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PREFACE

During the first four years after my father came out to Canada he wrote home to his family circle in England a series of letters which form the first part of this collection. These letters were carefully copied by his father, to whom they were chiefly addressed, and were bound in book form. They have thus been preserved in their entirety. The reason for copying them is suggested by the only surviving original letter. At that time letters were sent without envelopes and, as postage was charged by the sheet and was expensive, long letters, like this which survives, were so diligently "crossed" in the writing that they were difficult to read or refer to. When my father's family came to Canada to join him this book of copied letters, comprising the letters from 1833 to 1837, was left behind in England with William Langton the elder brother. He copied from the occasional letters my father continued to write to him portions of special interest, such as the extracts about Lumbering and the Clergy Reserves, but preserved the original manuscript of the letters about university affairs and the audit of the public accounts.

It was not until more than ten years after my father's death that his letters were brought out from their place of preservation and placed in my hands.

The letters concerning university affairs and the public accounts have been published in the Canadian Historical Review and were annotated by Mr. W. Stewart Wallace, the editor of the Review, whose notes have been preserved.

The illustrations of Peterborough and the Back Lakes were made by Anne Langton, after 1837 when she came out from England The views of Peterborough can hardly have been made before the years 1852-55, during which John Langton and his family lived in Peterborough. They are either exact reproductions of her drawings, though much reduced, or, where the originals were too worn for reproduction, are copies traced from her outlines, which were in ink, and finished in imitation of the originals

W A. LANGTON

ILLUSTRATIONS

Thomas Langton and John Langton	Frontispiece	
Thomas Langton and His Family - -	Facing	xiv
The Family Party at Blythe in 1840	"	xv
Peterborough from the West	"	xxxix
Peterborough from White's Tavern	"	5
Alexander McAndrew - -	"	61
Fenelon Falls with the Mill	"	72
Peterborough from the South	"	140
Blythe the Original Settlement -	"	159
Blythe at the Present Time	"	184
View of Blythe After Addition in 1841	"	188
The Church at Fenelon Falls - -	"	192
View from Blythe, Looking Towards Fenelon Falls - -	"	200
The House in Peterborough	"	213
William Langton	"	217
John Langton 1856	"	277
John Langton Aetat 70 -	"	302

S
P
Ir
M
P

CUTS IN THE TEXT

PAGE
Sketch Map of First Explorations 13
Plan of Cottage 38
Interior Views of Cottage 39
Map of the Rapids at Bobcaygeon 173
Plan of Blythe 184

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BIOGRAPHICAL SKETCH OF JOHN LANGTON

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BIOGRAPHICAL SKETCH

John Langton, the writer of these letters, was born at Blythe Hall, near Ormskirk, Lancashire, on April 6th, 1806. His father, Thomas Langton, who was a youngest son, was, for his portion, sent to Russia at the age of seventeen, to learn business in an English mercantile house at Riga, on the understanding of a partnership being provided for him on attaining his majority. As he was born in 1770, he cannot have been a partner for more than ten years when, at the beginning of the last century, as Europe was no longer a safe place for Englishmen, he returned to England with sufficient fortune to live comfortably, without active participation in business. The fortune was invested in a partnership with an elder brother in his business in Liverpool. Neither of the partners lived in Liverpool; management of the business was in the hands of a son of the elder brother.

Thomas Langton, having married in 1802 and bought Blythe Hall soon after, devoted himself to farming its lands and teaching his children grammar and Latin. He seems to have been of an inventive, if not speculative, disposition. The emigration later of his youngest son, John, to Canada was probably of his instigation. Allusions in these letters indicate that he burned to have a hand in the contrivance of life in the backwoods; and he finally came out there to live—or, as it turned out, to die.

At this earlier period, when his attention was given to the education of his children, he was so deeply impressed by the system of Pestalozzi that in 1815, when the final defeat of Napoleon opened up Europe again to travel, he decided to take his family to Switzerland to put the education of his children, William, Anne and John, in Pestalozzi's hands. So Blythe was let, and soon after the battle of Waterloo they left England and proceeded in a leisurely manner to Yverdon, where Pestalozzi had his school. There Mr. Langton took a house, and his two elder children were taught at home by tutors from Pestalozzi's Institute, while John, aged eight, went to the Institute. After two years at Yverdon, it was thought that a milder climate was necessary for the eldest son. For the next three years therefore the family lived in the south of France, Italy and Germany, receiving from tutors an ordinary English education, and acquiring also facility in speaking the languages of the countries in which they resided.

In the year 1820 they returned to England, because of anxiety about the conditions of the business in which the family fortune was invested. Whether any one was to blame, or whether it was merely the consequences of the state of the world after the Napoleonic wars, the business was much contracted and was no longer so profitable. In 1826 came a commercial crisis which decided Mr. Langton, for fear of involving his creditors, to wind up the business by private arrangement with them. There was no bankruptcy, but there was henceforth poverty. Had not an aunt come to the rescue, John, who was already entered at Cambridge, could not have continued there. He took his degree in 1829, and after some uncertainty and experiment in Liverpool emigrated to Canada in 1833, when he was twenty-five. His father tried, in more than one way, to restore to some extent his fortunes, but he was of the wrong age, and perhaps not of the right kind. In 1837, after much debate, he joined his son in Canada, with his wife, his daughter Anne, and his wife's sister, Miss Currer. The eldest son, William, who was now manager of Sir Benjamin Heywood's bank at Manchester, remained in England and became a distinguished banker, the creator of the Manchester and Salford Bank.

The following letters give an account of the settlement on Sturgeon Lake, near Fenelon Falls, on land which was afterwards called Blythe Farm. The first series of letters ceased with the arrival in Canada, in 1837, of the persons to whom they had been written.

The family life at Blythe Farm was of course monotonous and of private interest only, but the records show that it was both comfortable and happy; and, in consequence of the necessity of hospitality where there were no inns, Blythe, in spite of its remoteness, was often enlivened by society.

Thomas Langton had died early in 1838. To the family, then consisting of his mother, aunt and sister, John in 1845 added a wife, Lydia, the daughter of the Rev. James Hartley Dunsford of *The Beehive* on Sturgeon Lake. In 1847 his mother and aunt both died, and the tie that held him to the farm was broken. He had been experimenting before this in the square timber lumbering of that time, about which there are some letters included in this collection. Later he invested money in some mills near Peterborough. This took him to Peterborough to live. He became Warden of the county for some years. From 1851 to 1855 he represented in the Legislature, first the united

counties of Peterborough and Victoria, and afterwards the county of Peterborough

In 1855 he was appointed Auditor of public accounts. This involved a move to Toronto Soon after arrival there, the Governor General, Sir Edmund Head, appointed him to the Senate of the University of Toronto, and in the following year he was elected Vice Chancellor.

The Audit Office was new, and its methods and machinery were to be created; hence the interest attaching to the letters about the work which are included in this volume Addressed to his elder brother, who was by this time a person of large financial and executive experience, they may be regarded as part of the work of creation; a process of arranging and testing ideas by communicating them to a person of judgment in such matters. Confederation, with the accompanying need of co-ordinating the accounts of the provinces, enlarged the field of work He became then Auditor General and was also the Deputy Minister of Finance The combined offices he continued to carry on until he was superannuated in 1878. He was then seventy and lived in Toronto for sixteen years longer, dying on March 19, 1894.

UPPER CANADA IN EARLY DAYS

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A SKETCH OF CONDITIONS IN UPPER CANADA WHEN THE WRITER OF THE LETTERS CAME OUT FROM ENGLAND

For the better understanding of the letters which follow, it seems desirable to put together information derived from writers of the period and other sources which will help us to realize what Upper Canada was like in 1833, when John Langton came to the country.

About that time the idea of emigration to Canada had taken hold of young men in England and Scotland. Land ownership was the lure. The Canadian Government had spread its advertisements in the old country offering free land to some and cheap land to all; and land was still the Englishman's idea of property. For a few hundred pounds to own as many acres as his ancestors seemed a great chance to many a young man for whom there was but little chance at home. When the purchase of a few hundred acres of uncleared land was made, the family at home spoke of it as an estate.

It did not take long to convince immigrants of this type that an estate in Upper Canada was not the same sort of thing as an estate in England. Even those who realized that the value of the Canadian estate lay in the future felt little ground for satisfaction, for there was not much promise of prosperity in sight in Upper Canada. The current conditions were crude, and there seemed to be no machinery for improving them. The country was too exclusively agricultural, property consisted mainly of land. There was great need of industries as well; both to make employment for some of the immigrants who were better suited for that kind of life, and also to provide commodities within the country, so that the inhabitants need not buy everything from Great Britain and the United States.* Capital was needed to promote such industries, but there was no capital in the country in large amounts, that is to say there were no capitalists, and there were not enough banks to make available for such purposes the reserves of money that immigrants brought with them, which in the aggregate must have amounted to large sums. In the year 1831-32 there were 300,000 sovereigns deposited in the Bank of Upper Canada by new arrivals.† This bank, which was then the only bank, was said by William Lyon Mackenzie in an article in his *Colonial Advocate* to be "virtually under the control of the executive," and in the same article he charges the government with discouraging manufactures, "as interfering with the main object of a colony, to wit, the promotion of the trade, and enlargement of the patronage of the mother country." Whether this charge was true or not, it is a fact, as has been pointed out by Professor Mavor,‡ that the immediate consequence of responsible government, when it came, was the industrialization of the province. In the meantime commodities were imported, and the specie that for this purpose flowed out of the country into the United States, or flowed out of the province to Montreal and Quebec in payment for British goods, did not return. The only thing Upper Canada had to sell was flour, pork and other produce, of which things the United

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* Mavor, *An Economic History of Canada* (ms.)

† Magrath, *Authentic Letters from Upper Canada*, p. 123.

‡ *Op. cit.*

States had a superabundance and Lower Canada had enough.[*] Upper Canada was therefore reduced to the primitive condition of exchange by barter, a cumbrous process, which must have made saving difficult or impossible, and was credited by Howison with relaxing the moral fibre of both parties in a transaction. The articles exchanged had not a fixed value like money. The value of a farm labourer's monthly wage of thirteen or fourteen bushels of wheat (the equivalent of £3, the monthly wage of a man)[†] depended upon the quality of the wheat, and also, no doubt, upon conditions of storage, transport and the character of the farmer from whom it was due. It was the business of the store-keeper to secure his own position by rating the value of the wheat as low as possible, while the labourer's duty to his wife and family required him in self defence to exaggerate its value. To get the advantage in a barter acquired thus a character of right-doing which caused Howison to despair of the honesty of Canadians. And if in private transactions it was thought no harm to "take advantage," much less was it wrong to cheat the government in the matter of taxes, for these had to be paid in specie which it was not in mortals to command. Even the assessors lost their strictness in the face of an insurmountable difficulty.[‡] All this was of course a great hindrance to progress in the country. On the whole the producer suffers most in a system of barter, and agricultural improvements which required the purchase of equipment were indefinitely delayed. The farmer's motto, "Never buy anything, no matter how necessary it is," must have originated at this time.

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[*] Howison *Sketches of Upper Canada*, p. 127.
[†] *Ibid* p. 249.
[‡] *Ibid* p. 236.

As bad a handicap to the farmer, or worse, was the state of the roads. The only available material for making roads, as for everything else, was wood, which did not last long. The roads were soon an alternation of degenerate corduroy and mud-holes up to the axle. If the gaps in the corduroy were less than the diameter of the front wheel, it was possible to go on, by lowering gently each pair of wheels in turn into the gap and pulling them gently out again. If the gaps in the corduroy were too great, there was nothing for it but to fell a tree and fill the gaps—no one travelled without his axe. Sometimes Mrs. Jameson found that the mudholes were made less abysmal by boughs of oak spread over them, which answered the immediate purpose but were apt to prove a trap for those who came after.*

There is no easier way of sinking money in a new country than in making roads and keeping them in repair, and the credit of Canada (then, as Professor Mavor says, "a remote and little known colony") was not strong, but Mackenzie in the *Colonial Advocate* thought something should have been done. "Our roads", he said, "are in general in a wretched condition, and the situation of many of the back settlers so miserable as to render them objects of pity and commiseration in the eyes of any government other than a colonial one." The natural waterways of the country were, of course, a great advantage, and the Welland Canal was already built. The Rideau Canal was also finished in 1831, but its purpose was military rather than commercial. The only other effort then being made in the way of improving the water communication of Upper Canada was the construction of locks at

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* Jameson, *Winter Studies and Summer Rambles*, Vol. II, p. 119

Bobcaygeon, mentioned in these letters and interesting as a first instalment of the Trent Valley Canal which, after eighty four years, we have seen completed in 1918.

Of railways nobody yet thought It does not seem to have occurred to the writer of these letters or to others at that time, that there was any mode of transport in prospect for Canada better than canals connecting the great lakes. Yet in 1837, four years after his arrival, he writes that Michigan, just made a State, was incurring a debt of $5,000,000 to commence constructing three great railroads from one end of the State to the other He says, however,—"This system of going ahead seems to have answered in the States, but I doubt whether there is sufficient spirit amongst us to carry the system through"

The contrast with the United States was always in the minds of people in those days It was only necessary to cross the border into the United States to see bustle and progress in the place of the apparent stagnation of Canada, and it was natural to attribute the difference in the life of the two countries to the difference in the forms of government Thus as W L Grant says,* "A desire for American institutions grew up—that it did not grow more widely is the remarkable thing" There was, of course, plenty of prejudice against republicanism among the U E Loyalists, who had inherited an abhorrence of the United States government; and there was also, quite apart from political feeling, a general dislike of the "Yankees," as they were always called, who had migrated to Canada. These had come over in large numbers. They did not usually take up land. They preferred some occupation in which their hands were nearer the pockets of the public. To keep a store or a tavern suited them best We can imagine the opportunities afforded to a sharp storekeeper in the bartering period when, as Howison says, with a sympathy somewhat more than generous, "the merchants are obliged to impoverish and oppress the people by exorbitant charges" Of the American tavern keepers, the testimony of all travellers is the same, as little accommodation as possible was given, and that with the rudest of manners The truth is that these Americans were adventurers and had the spirit of adventurers rather than of citizens A travelling American clockmaker, to whom Mrs Traill complained of the manners of his countrymen, explained the matter by saying that the Americans in Canada "were for the most part persons of no reputation, many of whom had fled to the Canadas to escape from debt or other disgraceful conduct, and added, 'It would be hard if the English were to be judged as a nation by the convicts of Botany Bay'"*

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* *History of Canada*, p. 194

Such being the character of the "Yankees" in Upper Canada, they served a useful purpose to those who preferred the British character, as warnings that it might be safer to plod on with their country as it was, and hope for improvement The backwardness of Canada was, as a matter of fact, due chiefly to the form of government, but only one change was needed—an executive which was responsible to the electors—to make the form of government as practical as that of the United States for the development of the country To do this was really impossible so long as the Colonial Office was considered to be the ultimate authority for all acts of government. The *corpus* of th

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* Traill *Backwoods of Canada*, p 293.

Government of Upper Canada[*] consisted of, first, the Lieutenant Governor, appointed by the Crown, i.e., the Colonial Office; secondly an Executive Council of seven, of which three members, the Chief Justice of Upper Canada, the Bishop of Quebec, and the Archdeacon of York, were *ex officio*, and four were the direct appointment of the Lieutenant Governor; thirdly, a Legislative Council of seventeen members "summoned" by the Lieutenant Governor and his Executive, and fourthly, a Legislative Assembly of fifty members representing counties and towns.

The Executive Council were only advisers of the Lieutenant Governor, not a cabinet responsible to the representatives of the people, and the Lieutenant Governor was only the local adviser of the Colonial Office. As Lord Durham afterwards said[†] the Lieutenant Governor did not even really represent the Crown; he was merely a subordinate of the British executive receiving his orders from the Secretary of State, and responsible to him for his conduct. However, "the Governor", as he is always called in these letters, though but a subordinate of the Colonial Office, was the subordinate on the spot and, in his own sphere, seems to have been a somewhat despotic person. His accredited functions gave him much political power in the way of the appointment and control of legislators and the occasions of their meeting, but he exercised also much influence apart from the law. Sir John Colborne, who was the Governor in 1833, was trying to steer settlers towards the lands of the Canada Company. His visit later to the settlement on Sturgeon

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[*] The Constitutional Act of 1791 is the principal source of information for the following paragraphs on this subject.

[†] Lord Durham's Report.

Lake (the settlement with which these letters are chiefly concerned), and his approval of what he saw, raised high hopes in the young men of the lake that he would help their fortunes. They wanted settlers to be sent to their district, and they knew the Governor could send them.

With all these powers and activities the Governor had no deciding power in legislation. An Act to which he had given his assent had still to be approved by the Colonial Office, and two years were allowed for the officials there to make up their mind about it and submit it to the Sovereign with their opinion. When accepted or rejected, the Governor was notified of the result, and proclaimed the Act to be law or nullified it, as the case might be This was a slow process for a growing country, but those days were slow to an extent that we have difficulty in imagining There was no means of communication except by mail or messenger, over such roads as we have just been considering. There must have been a certain amount of liveliness along "the front," as the shores of the great lakes were called Shirreff speaks of steamers, in York harbour, arriving and departing almost hourly* That, of course, would be only in the summer, and behind the front there was nothing of the kind, life was remote, solitary and slow The great rebellion of 1837 was begun and finished before it was heard of in Bobcaygeon—now three hours away by train, less by motor, and only a moment by telephone Two years would not therefore seem to the early settlers of Canada so long as we think it would Nor did they think in the same way as we should of their position of dependence on the will of the home government. Government by the governed was not an idea of the popular mind; and perhaps it was as well, for not only was the popular mind not very well educated just then—"Mr B. a native Canadian" told Mrs Jameson that not one person in seventy, in the back townships, could read or write*—but it was also somewhat disordered in its thinking by arrival in a new country where every man could become a landed proprietor, that is to say, according to the immigrants' old-world ideas, a member of a privileged class. There are numberless stories of the disturbing effect of this supposed sudden rise in the world. Sir John Beverley Robinson, the Chief Justice of Upper Canada at this time, was probably right in his generation in saying† that it was unsafe to trust the government of the country to the unskilled and ill educated rabble, easily led by demagogues who in those days were republican enthusiasts, and were the more dangerous because, though the majority of the country were loyal to the rather trying home government, they were indifferent to public affairs, and anxious only to attend to their business.

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* *A Tour through North America* p. 105

There was a recognizable official class, mainly but not entirely of U. E. Loyalist descent, who were of the same way of thinking as the Chief Justice. They accepted the offices of government as theirs, and with them the emoluments thereof; but they accepted also the duties of office, and one of the duties was to guard the country from less honourable men. Like Sir John Beverley Robinson they feared the multitude. They were the aristocrats but they were not wealthy, and it is to their credit that no accusation has been made of their using the power in their hands to enrich themselves.[*] This influential circle, as described in narratives of visitors to Canada in the thirties, seems to have practised English social distinctions in an accentuated form,[†] as if they were afraid of the relaxing influence of a new country. Mrs. Jameson said, "Toronto is like a fourth or fifth rate provincial town, with the pretensions of a capital city."[‡] She found there "the worst evils of our old and most artificial social system, with none of its *agrémens*, and none of its advantages."

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* *Op. cit.* I, 34.

† Grant, *op. cit.* p. 185.

Her account of Toronto, as it had come to be called shortly before she arrived there, is as it appeared in winter—"Most strangely mean and melancholy. A little ill built town on low land, at the bottom of a frozen bay, with one very ugly church, without tower or steeple; some government offices, built of staring red brick, in the most tasteless vulgar style imaginable, and the grey, sullen, wintry lake, and the dark gloom of the pine forest bounding the prospect; such seems Toronto to me now."[§] The tall pine forest and sullen lake were visible boundaries: it was a small place. Mrs. Stewart[**] describes it as "sunk down in a little amphitheatre cut out of the great, bleak forest." Samuel Thompson writing of its dimensions when he arrived there, in September, 1833[††] describes it as an oblong bounded by Queen, King, York and Church Streets. South of King Street was the Bay, bordered by trees on a reedy shore and echoing to the sound of the duck shooter's gun. There was not much movement or life in the streets. There were some good shops, and a market frequented by the smaller householders. People of means, Mrs Jameson says,* were supplied from their own farms or by arrangement with people they knew or employed. The only market vegetable was potatoes Beef, mutton and pork were there—not good, Mrs. Jameson says, except the pork which was corn fed. They had, however, fish all the winter as well as in summer; black bass and whitefish, caught through holes in the ice There were sea salmon in the lakes in those days, as far up as the Falls of Niagara. T. W. Magrath, who lived at Erindale on the Credit River, about nine miles west of Toronto, caught salmon within twenty yards of his front door, "as fine as I ever met in Ireland, as firm and full of curd as within ten miles of the sea instead of five hundred" Game was always to be had, venison and wild fowl of many kinds ducks and geese, partridge, snipe and woodcock. Quail were also then caught in immense numbers, near Toronto The passenger pigeons still came in undiminished numbers. They are mentioned more than once in these letters They seem to have compared with the locust of the east in destructiveness. Howison records† that in Ohio, where they were more numerous than in Canada, "Wilson, the ornithologist, saw a flock of these birds which extended he judged, more than a mile in breadth, and continued to pass over his head at the rate of one mile in a minute during four hours, thus making the whole length about 240 miles"

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[*] Wallace, *The Family Compact*, pp. 2-3 and 95
[†] Grant, *op. cit.*, p. 194.
[‡] *Op. cit.* I. 100.
[§] *Ibid.* I, 2.
[**] Stewart. *Our Forest Home.* p. 13.
[††] Thompson. *Reminiscences*, p. 39

That is one man's opinion

Among the shops were two book shops; one with a circulating library There would be nothing very new to be found in them, for books published in England took two years to reach Toronto.[*] People who did read, in those days, were not so much on the look out for new books as we are. The small fry of literature had hardly made their appearance. It was leviathans like Scott and Byron who wrote the best sellers; and Fenimore Cooper's works (alluded to in these letters) represented the exciting type of novel. A gentleman's library contained chiefly standard works, and probably a bookseller's stock was mostly of this kind. If a Toronto bookseller was asked for a book that was not in stock he always said, according to Mrs. Jameson, "that it could be sent for to Buffalo."[†] In Buffalo, which had then a population of 20,000, about twice that of Toronto, she found several good bookshops.

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* *Op. cit.* I. 267

† *Op. cit.*, p. 175.

For current reading matter there were chiefly the American reprints of English magazines. There were also the newspapers, not containing much news but filled chiefly with paragraphs on subjects of general interest copied from English and American papers, with extracts from books and magazines and a summary of political events.[‡] There were about forty newspapers in Upper Canada,[§] but there was not much more to be learned from the whole forty than from one, for they had a way of copying from one another the passages which were copied in the first place. The newspapers were mostly weeklies. There was no daily paper until, in 1836, the *Royal Standard* was published in Toronto.[**]

There must have been some leaven of learning in the society of York, because of the presence of King's

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[*] Jameson, *op. cit.* I, 27.

[†] *Ibid.* II, 81.

[‡] *Ibid.* I, 271-2.

[§] *Ibid.* I, 272.

[**] Grant, *op. cit.* p. 180.

College and Upper Canada College. The latter is always spoken of with pity by visitors of those days—"it does not appear that much good has yet arisen from it," it had "a system of education which appears narrow and defective"[*]—but it was staffed by graduates of Oxford and Cambridge. King's College, though its charter dates from 1827, was not active until, in 1843, it became the University of Toronto. The President of King's College was Archdeacon Strachan, an old schoolmaster, and no doubt a man of learning. Mrs. Jameson says that Archdeacon Strachan and Chief Justice Robinson had "very pretty libraries."[†]

For the greater part of Toronto society, books were probably not so important as other things. We have a record of the conversation at a social gathering.[‡] The ladies' topics were:—marriages ~~and births~~, lamentations on want of servants and state of the roads, last letters from England, character of new neighbours come to settle. The gentlemen's topics were:—crops and clearings, lumber, price of wheat, road mending, deer shooting, logburning, etc.; and any man's heart must go out to them with envy. This conversation, it is true, was held at Woodstock not at Toronto, but Woodstock was a stronghold of the well to do English immigrants. It was there that Admiral Van Sittart had his house, a log house of many additions, extending over the ground in all directions and looking, it was said, more like an African village than a house, but inside it was full of *objets d'art* from Italy.

Whatever the character of their conversation people saw much of one another in those days. Even in the backwoods there was constant exercise of hospitality, and little was thought of distance or difficulty. People were known to come to a ball at Government House, Toronto, from distances of fifty, a hundred and even two hundred miles.* The young men on Sturgeon Lake, with whom these letters are concerned, would go down to a ball at Peterborough, over thirty miles away by water, and when they had danced all night, to let the ladies have daylight for their drive home, would row back next day to their farms. The lack of good servants, or of any servants, was made up for by the willingness of the guests to help in the preparations for the feast. The afternoon might be spent in useful occupation; the ladies very busy in the kitchen, while the young men painted a boat before the windows within the range of conversation as well as of sight; and at the proper time all withdrew, to come together again at table, clean, and on special occasions in evening dress.

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[*] Jameson, *Op. cit.* I, 27.

[†] *Ibid.* I, 271.

[‡] *Ibid.* II, 129.

The lack of servants was a serious trouble, perhaps greater in the towns than upon the farms. The daughter of a small settler was often available for domestic service with a richer neighbour, when she was not wanted at home; but such service was apt to be fluctuating. In the towns the persons offering for domestic service were chiefly the lower class of Irish immigrants who, having been accustomed only to want and dirt, were not of much use for producing cleanliness and comfort. The wages at the house of Vice-Chancellor Jameson were $8 a month for the man, $6 for the cook, and $4 for the housemaid; but Mrs. Jameson says that good, experienced servants would get more.† People,

however, emigrated to make their fortunes, not to become domestic servants. Moreover, that condition had more the appearance of servitude in this wonderful new land where people were addressed as "sir" or spoken of as "gentlemen," and where no well dressed person expected less well dressed persons to touch their hats when speaking to him. This equality of consideration, if not actually confused with equality of position, seemed to indicate its near approach and bred disinclination to any kind of domestic service, where the distinction between him that serveth and him that sitteth at meat is well defined.

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* Jameson, *op. cit.* I, 292

† *Ibid.* I, 260

We hear from all travellers of the rude manners adopted by the newly arrived in this free country; by Scots and Irishmen particularly, less so by the English. Howison* tells of two Scotchmen whom he saw in Montreal just after their arrival in Canada, and saw again in Kingston not long after. At Montreal they took off their hats; at Kingston they nodded with easy familiarity. On the latter occasion he addressed them by their Christian names as to their prospect of getting employment. "This gentleman," said one, pointing to his companion who was a bricklayer, "has been offered four shillings a day at Prescott, but his good lady does not like the place." Mrs. Traill has a similar story in her *Backwoods of Canada*.† The exhibit in this case was a young Scotchman, engineer of a steamer, who was "surly and almost insolent" when Lieut. Traill asked him to explain the working of the engine. Instead of doing as he was asked he seated himself on the bench, close beside Mrs. Traill, and explained to her that one of the advantages of this country was that he was not obliged to take off his hat when he spoke to people ("meaning," Mrs Traill says, "persons of our degree"); and, besides, he could go and take his seat beside any gentleman or lady either, and think himself to the full as good as them. Mrs. Traill suggested that he over rated the privilege, because he could not oblige the lady or gentleman to share his opinion of himself or to remain seated beside him—which she, rather unkindly, did not. Lieutenant Traill then took up the conversation and, without giving ground, managed to convince the man that he might explain the working of his engine without losing the fruits of emigration. "What makes a gentleman?" said the man in the course of the argument; "I'll thank you to answer me that." "Good manners and good education," was the reply; "A rich man, or a high born man, if he is rude, ill mannered, and ignorant, is no more a gentleman than yourself." The interest of this story lies almost as much in the Traills' unhesitating confidence of their superiority as in the man's misconception of his position. Oil was oil and water was water in those days, and not only could the two never mix but one lay naturally on top of the other, so naturally that, though social degrees play often an important part in fiction of the period, they do not seem to be noticed by the writers as any more peculiar than that the sun should shine by day and the moon by night. It is, curiously enough, from narratives of life in this country, where the process of emulsification had begun, that we realize best what the old order of things must have been in England.

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* *Op. cit.*, p. 62.
† Pp. 83-85.

This exaggerated idea of the privileges of the new country was chiefly noticeable among new-comers. Those who got settled on the land soon found that the

landed proprietor's principal privilege was to be never out of work. We hear no more of them then as theorists Howison says, "A deliberate inspection of a new settlement sinks man lower in the estimation of the observer than perhaps ever before" There is a general agreement among writers about the squalid appearance of the new settlers' dwellings, and the woman writers agree in wondering that there were no flowers about the loghouses The same people, they said, if they had remained at home, would have had gardens full of flowers. This may be accounted for partly by the way things grow in England and by the force of habit and local rivalry These were wanting in the backwoods, but other things were wanting too—seeds, for instance Yankee seeds, in sealed packets only opened when paid for, were found to contain chaff, empty husks, and worm-eaten seeds.* There is no occasion, however, to go deep in considering the matter. The shanties displayed no care because the occupants had no time or strength for care A new clearing was a desolate place for the first year or two. It produced no food, and, if the settler had no money, he had to hire himself out to get some in order to maintain his family There were no animals; for cows, pigs and fowls must eat also. There were some hard years to be got through before a living was assured but the very poor, for whom the early years were hardest, were those who in the end profited most by emigration. They had usually the sense to see their future and hold on until their farm produced enough to give them a constant round of plain living With food, warmth and shelter, they had all they could have hoped for in the old world, and independence too Many went under, chiefly from taking up too much land. It was cheap, about fifteen shillings an acre and only a quarter of the purchase price must be paid down. The rest was payable in three equal annual payments with interest at six per cent., which might accumulate. When it was allowed to do so, the case, for a man of no capital, was usually hopeless. In three years he could only clear about thirty acres, which, counting out the stumps, did not give more than twenty acres available for crops. A return of ten shillings an acre, i.e., £10 from the farm, was as much as could be expected, and the interest on the debt would be about the same.*

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* Traill, *op. cit.*, p. 179

Another class of immigrants consisted of persons having a small income, among whom were many half pay British officers. Their income was not enough for bringing up their families in England in a way they thought proper, but it enabled them to live with considerable comfort on a Canadian farm. They could not make the farm add to their income because of the cost of labour, but, if they had chosen their land well and it rose in value as the country became more settled, they were often able, when the education of their children became an anxiety, to sell with advantage and move into one of the towns.

The small towns of this period had often a pleasant social circle, recruited from this class of immigrants. Most of the principal towns, in the part of Ontario that was then Upper Canada, were by this time in existence. Kingston, though its population was less than 5,000, was in some respects a rival of York. In 1825 it was reckoned the largest town in Upper Canada. It was the naval and military depot at one end of the Rideau Canal, and had a branch of the Bank of Montreal, the

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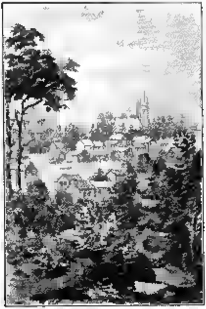
* See Shirreff's account of the settlers' problem, op. cit., p. 363.



PETERBOROUGH FROM THE WEST
A water colour by Anne Langton

only bank in the province besides the Bank of Upper Canada at Toronto. Hamilton, as the capital of the Gore district, was flourishing, with a population of 3,000. St. Catharines had salt works and was the place of origin of the Welland Canal. London had a population of only 1,300, when Mrs. Jameson was there in 1836, but it had about 200 houses, a jail and court house, described as "somewhat Gothic," five churches, three or four schools and seven taverns.

The town upon which we must concentrate attention, in an introduction to the letters which follow, is Peterborough. Shirreff, whose *Tour through North America* was published in the very year these letters begin, does not speak of it with much respect. He describes it as "a number of mean houses, scattered over a considerable extent of surface." The population was placed at 1,000 souls, though Shirreff would not have rated it so high. He adds that it was "said to contain a number of military and naval half pay officers of Britain, and the society to be the most polished and aristocratic in Canada."[*] It was called Peterborough after Mr. Peter Robinson (a brother of the Chief Justice, then Attorney General), who, in 1825, went to Cork and brought out 500 emigrants to settle in Douro, and appears to have stayed by them and acted as their guardian and adviser until they were settled. At this time, Mrs. Stewart says,[†] there was but one inhabitant of Peterborough, Adam Scott, who had a mill on "the Plains," so the Irish immigrants, who squatted at first on the Plains while their shanties in Douro were being built, were the first population of the place. Yet in 1832, Mrs. Traill,[‡] a year or so earlier than Shirreff's account, supports him when she says there was "a very genteel society, chiefly composed of officers and their families, besides the professional men and store keepers, many of the latter persons of respectable family and good education"—"The store keeper in Canada," she says, "holds a very different rank from the shopkeeper of the English village. The storekeepers are the merchants and bankers of the places in which they reside" In 1832, the year before these letters began, there were* "several saw and grist mills, a distillery, fulling mill, two principal inns, besides smaller ones, a number of good stores, a government school house, which also serves for a church, till one more suitable should be built"—which happened in 1836, when St John's was completed.†

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[*] P. 123.

[†] Op. cit., p. 45. She calls him "Walter", probably an error.

[‡] *Op. cit.*, p. 81.

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* *Ibid.* p. 89.
† Stewart, *op cit.*, p 94.

THE ADVENTURE OF SETTLING

LETTERS OF 1833 AND 1834

[The account of the sea voyage in a sailing ship is interesting, but not a necessary part of a backwoods record. No more perhaps is a description of New York, as it was on July 6th, 1833, but the description is interesting and short.]

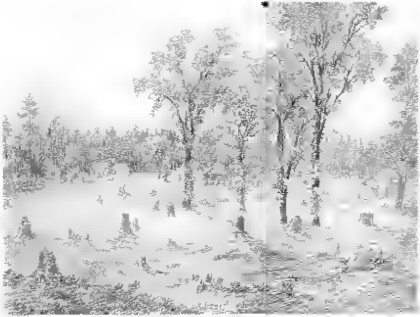
The Bay is certainly very pretty, but nothing like that of Naples to which the Yankees like to compare it. The town—or rather city—is striking from its contrast to any other great seaport I know Very little bustle is seen in the streets, and none of those heavy waggons we are accustomed to at Liverpool. The streets all over the town, even those leading to the docks, are lined with trees, which, together with the quietness of the scene, give it more the appearance of a country town in England than the great Emporium of the west. The Broadway, the principal street, leads from the Battery gardens (a pretty walk which occupies the point fronting the harbour) for at least one and a half miles through the center of the town, it is an excellent street, full of very English looking shops, and is the most busy part of the town, but it is the business of Bond Street, not of Cheapside

7th. Being Sunday, went to one of the Episcopalian churches and might have fancied myself in England again, excepting the perpetual waving, which was kept up all the time, of certain—fans I suppose they are called here, they would be called fire screens in England—which are an inseparable accompaniment of the ladies in this country. I must also except the want of the true orthodox twang in the Clerk

[The journey from New York was by the Hudson—"a magnificent stream about as like the Rhine as St Paul's is to Westminster Abbey—but the Yankees, if they hear of anything praiseworthy in another country, must find a counterpart in their own." He went to Troy, a twenty four hours journey, and thence by the Erie Canal to Oswego As "the weekly Steamboat had sailed for York" (i.e, Toronto) "that morning" passage was taken by schooner to Cobourg, whence steam boats to York were said to be frequent. This accident seems to have governed his fate for he was detained at Cobourg waiting for a steamer and heard there a good account of the district above Peterborough, what we call the Kewartha Lakes, then known as the Newcastle District]

I have determined [he says] upon leaving my baggage here, and going up the country myself to Peterborough, the Sturgeon Lake and the township of Verulam before I go on to York. From all I can hear here from residents and land hunters like myself that I have met with, that will be the part of the country most likely to suit me, and as this is the nearest town to those townships, I shall start at four to-morrow and walk to the Rice Lake, whence I can proceed by steam to Peterborough, anything beyond that depends on circumstances. In about ten days I propose being in York,

[From York, on his return from the expedition to Peterborough and beyond, he writes an account of it, the first of a series of letters which form a connected narrative.]



Peterborough from White's Tavern

Pencil drawing by Anne Langton

To his Father

York, U C, Aug 2, 1833

Having a couple of hours before dinner with nothing particular to do, I have bought a large sheet of paper that my account of my adventures may not unnecessarily fatigue your eyes with the small hand and the crossings which I was obliged to resort to in my two last letters.* My last from Cobourg informed you of my journey up the country and my proposed exploring expedition into the Newcastle district; the next morning (22nd July) accordingly I started by the stage or rather waggon, and after jolting over thirteen miles of mud and stumps arrived to dinner on the Rice Lake, which, as its name would denote, is a low, muddy, ✓ swampy, aguish looking place, covered over with Canadian rice and other aquatic weeds From thence I proceeded twenty five miles by steamer up the Otonabee to Peterborough, where, having gone to the wrong hotel, I occupied one eleventh of seven beds

The Otonabee (with the accent on the second syllable) is a fine river, winding through the forests, and perfectly navigable up to Peterborough, with the exception of one rapid a little below the town, where even the steamer had to assist herself by warping The banks are very low, and immediately upon the water (as is the case in Canada universally wherever I have been) not very good, further back however there is no cause for complaint. All the lands have long been taken up and fetch a high price, but there are not more than half a dozen clearings all the way. I take shame to myself for having omitted to mention that at the two principal bends of the river there are two cities, Cambleton* and Howard, the one consisting of a shanty, and the other of a loghouse without windows.

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* Letters in those days were charged postage by the sheet. As envelopes were not used but the paper merely folded and sealed, the number of sheets was distinguishable by the postman. A single sheet of paper, not exceeding an ounce in weight, was charged single postage A second piece of paper or any other enclosure, however small, constituted the packet a double letter But a single sheet of paper if it at all exceeded an ounce in weight, was charged with four fold postage. As postage was paid by the recipient of the letter, the reasons given for using the large sheet of paper are of the nature of an apology

The 23rd. I was up early, and walked about the town and neighbourhood, which seems very thriving, indeed, from its being the center of an immense internal navigation, and from its being the only inland town in Canada, its inhabitants would fain believe that it will one day become the capital of the province.

Land in the neighbourhood has become very dear; the last town lot of half an acre sold, fetched £50, and, on the opposite side of the river, one lot of half an acre, being in a beautiful situation for building, sold for £100. All the low land on the banks of the river is reserved by Government, and the trees on it are only thinned, so that the town has not that naked appearance that characterizes the new towns in America. Peterborough would pass for a pretty thriving town even in England. After breakfast I called on Col. Brown, who showed me the lions and introduced me to several gentlemen of the place, in the evening I drank tea there and met ladies for the first time since leaving Liverpool. We walked up to Mr. Stuart's place, a couple of miles up the river. He was the first settler in the neighbourhood about twelve years ago, before Peterborough was thought of and when it was two or three hard days journey from Cobourg through the forest. He still lives in the original loghouse, but it is made as comfortable and ornamental as any cottage in England, and he has a fine clearing. It is Mr. Stuart[*] who wrote that account of his first settlement which you may remember in Basil Hall's America.

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* Campbellford.

24th. With my knapsack, a blanket, and some pork and biscuit upon my back, and a bottle of whiskey hanging John Gilpin like at my side, I set off on my travels and walked through six miles of mud holes (for really a road is too good a name for many parts) to Chemong Lake, the old appellation, Mud Lake, having lately been dropped. Here a steamboat is building and will ply upon the lakes in about a month; how her engines were ever transported through the aforesaid mud holes is to me a mystery.[†] Having borrowed a boat, I proceeded along the Mud Lake, which notwithstanding the nature of its bottom does not deserve the name, and reached the Indian village at its exit at dark; there are several clearings on Chemong Lake. Finding the man I was directed to absent on a hunting excursion, and not being able to get any answer out of the other Indians, I went to the schoolmaster for assistance. He gave me a supper and a clean bed, for which he would receive nothing, and procured me a guide in the person of a handsome and intelligent Indian. And now that I am fairly amongst the savages you will perhaps expect some romantic description; the tomahawk and scalping knife, the chivalrous tuft of hair, the moccasins, the robe, the war paint and barbaric ornaments should all have been detailed to you; but imagine my disappointment at being intro duced to a respectable looking young man, dressed decently like a Christian in coat, waistcoat and trousers, wearing a checked shirt and neckcloth, and covering his thick black hair with a common straw hat. This person, who owned so long unpronounceable name, but answered to the familiar appellation of Stephen Elliot, agreed to become my conductor for $1 a day; and accordingly, the next morning, the 25th, soon after sunrise, I seated myself on my pack at the bottom of his canoe, in company with two young foxes, and was paddled by Stephen and his stepson, William, up into Pigeon Lake. There are a few settlers on Pigeon Lake, but only one on the part I traversed, though the land is all occupied. On the river which joins Pigeon to Sturgeon Lake is a rapid, by name Bob Cajwin, where the scenery is picturesque, and (what is better) where there are good mill sites which Need* has purchased. Through these rapids a canal is in process of formation which, next spring, will admit the new steamboat upon Sturgeon Lake up to Cameron's Falls,† and up the Scugog River into the township of Ops. A little above Bob Cajwin is Need's clearing where I stopped, but, not finding him in, I returned to Capt Sawers' at the rapids, where I found him, and about one o'clock made an excellent breakfast upon some venison he had killed that morning. At his shanty I slept, after looking over his clearings and visiting the only other settler, on the opposite side of the lake.

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[*] Mr. Stuart is evidently Thomas Alexander Stewart, the husband of Frances Stewart, whose journals and letters form the book *Our Forest Home* describing their settlement in Douro Township near Peterborough.

[†] The writer had not yet become acquainted with the advantages of snow.

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* He had been given a letter of introduction to Mr Need. A little book called *Six Years in the Bush*, written by Mr Need in 1838 while he was in England on a visit, makes sometimes an interesting parallel narrative to that of these letters. In it Mr Need describes his own settlement on Aug 9, 1838.

† Now Fenelon Falls.

26th. At nine I embarked again and proceeded along Sturgeon Lake pausing occasionally as I went to look at desirable situations, and, about noon, arrived at Cameron's Falls. The river below the falls winds through precipitous banks on both sides, affording many beautiful views, until, at one turn, you find yourself suddenly within twenty yards of the falls. I apply the term precipitous according to the literal meaning of the word; but the rock is hardly anywhere more than twenty feet high, and would hardly accord with our ideas of lofty precipices. The falls are a Niagara in miniature—just the same shape and with a great body of water, though only twenty-two feet of pitch; it is a very beautiful spot.

Around these falls Mr. Jameson, whom I remember by sight as a young man in Liverpool, has made a large purchase and is very active in bringing out settlers of the poorest sort to occupy his land. I spent an hour or two on the spot where he has some men clearing, but the greater part of the lands about seem very poor, the situation being the principal object.

A little after three I embarked again, and was now beyond the last settlement. On the road I visited an old clearing which has been grown up for the last twenty years, where my guide's father had formerly lived. Whilst I was visiting his father's grave, (for whose sake I hope there were not as many mosquitoes about then as there are now) Stephen contrived to broach my whiskey bottle, without my knowing it; but, by its diminished weight and his noisy commendations of my sobriety, I soon found out the fact. Indeed he shortly appeared to be very near drunk and grew very importunate for more, though much alarmed lest the boy should see him drink and tell his mother (a henpecked Indian!) When he found me firm he turned sulky, the consequence of which was that I could not get him above the rapids into Balsam Lake, and we were obliged to take up our abode for the night in a cedar swamp. Having no axe with us we could not obtain hard wood for our fire, and were obliged to be content with the dead boughs we picked up; but, after we had cooked and eaten our supper, I slept very comfortably upon my bed of cedar branches, notwithstanding the attacks of the mosquitoes.

27th. We were off again soon after daybreak and breakfasted on a point near the head of Balsam Lake, beyond the boundaries of the surveyed townships. After coasting along the northern shore, as we were crossing to take a look at the surveyed portion below, a storm came on which rendered it almost impossible to get across in that direction, and, as I had already seen enough to judge of the situation, and as the wind was favourable for our return I resolved to make a great push to reach Need's that night; and, after a severe day's work, with the assistance of the stream and a blanket which we put up as a sail, we arrived there soon after dark, and found that, during our absence, he had built a house. In our return we shot the rapids above Cameron's Falls to within about five yards of the brink, and after the Indians had got out, Stephen held the end of the canoe from the shore and let me down until, sitting in my canoe above, I could see the water boiling and foaming down below—"a very pokerish looking place" as Stephen observed.

28th. Need and I went to breakfast at Sawers' and about noon I started again and arrived at the Landing on Chemong Lake at sunset. It being near full moon my desire to sleep in a comfortable bed again induced me to brave the mudholes, and I arrived in Peterborough in safety

[At Peterborough he waited for a Government sale of lands which did not come off, but, he says, "I made acquaintance in the inn with several gentlemen from whom I obtained much information upon the country" The country was naturally the principal subject of conversation among the land hunters who met one another at the inn, who were for the most part Englishmen of some education. To this must be attributed a knowledge of the country, and familiarity with the procedure necessary in purchasing land, such as one would not expect in letters written so soon after arrival

The preference for the Newcastle District was based upon its chain of lakes which gave promise of being a great water way, and water was still the only means of conveying goods in large quantity The land hunters were therefore using good judgment according to their lights. It would be too much to expect that the writer of these letters, although he had but a short time before been one of the guests carried in the trial trip of the railroad from Liverpool to Manchester, the first working railroad in the world, should connect that experiment with the idea of a railroad running, about twenty years after, from one end to the other of the Canada of those days. He would have even less expected that the Trent Valley Canal which was begun then in parts, and appears to have been projected in its entirety, would not be finished until the year 1918]

To-day (Aug 2nd), after looking about the town [York], I waited upon the Governor [Sir John Colborne] and had great difficulty in avoiding giving him a promise to go through the western townships before finally settling, it being his policy at present to send all respectable emigrants there; but, from all I have heard from those who have been there, I do not think they would suit me, and time is too precious to waste in merely looking about me. The great distance of land carriage, the high price of labour and the want of water, more than compensate for the quality of the land: that, I believe, is unquestionably superior to the average of these districts, and it is equally good everywhere; but there is also excellent land on the lakes, though you cannot, as in the west, buy land blindfold with security.

There are several reasons which induce me to give a preference to the Newcastle district. It is the most English of all the districts and the society of a superior caste; lands are to be purchased there cheaper than in any part at an equal distance from a market; there is not that want of water that has caused such great loss in many of the inland townships; instead of being shut up on all sides by the forests, you may obtain a healthy, airy frontage to some of the numerous lakes which, besides making the situation more pleasant, and, I should think, healthy, enables the settlers to burn,* when in the confined clearings in the heart of the forest there is not a breath of air stirring; mill sites are of course more numerous; labour is cheaper; and lastly and principally, they have an extent of internal navigation unparalleled in any part of the world, I should think.

I have annexed a diagram of part of the Newcastle district which may give you some idea of the lakes,

which are miserably laid down in all the maps I have seen Beginning at the top with Balsam Lake, two portages one of three and the other of seven miles, connect it with Lake Simcoe from the West Bay, and the river to the north is navigable for canoes a long way, through a string of small lakes Where there is the mark **V** there is a rapid where *one* lock will join it to Cameron Lake, and just below this the Burnt River is navigable some way, through a rich country Two locks at Cameron's Falls lead into the North Branch

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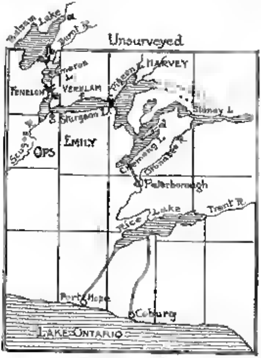
* To burn thoroughly the heaps of green tree trunks accumulated in a chopped clearing was a difficult matter, and to have one side of the clearing open to the draught from a lake was an advantage.


Balsam Lake
a
Burnt R.
Unsurveyed
Cameron L.
Fenelon
Verulam
Pigeon L.
Harvey
Sturgeon L.
Stoney L.
Scugog R.
Ops
Emily
Chemong L.
Otonabee R.
Peterborough
Rice Lake
Trent R.
Port Hope
Coburg
Lake Ontario

of Sturgeon Lake; the southern one is navigable through the township of Ops to within forty miles of York. One more lock at Bob Cajwin, which is to be completed this fall, leads into Pigeon Lake, the three rivers of which are navigable some ways; and on, through Buckhorn, Sandy and Chemong Lakes, the passage is quite open. Six miles land carriage to Peterborough and thirteen to Cobourg lead you to the Ontario. The Trent too is navigable near twenty miles below Rice Lake, and a canal of ten or fifteen more, to avoid the windings and rapids, will continue it on to the Bay of Quinte.

After having seen these beautiful lakes, and rivers abounding in mill sites, who would go to settle in the Governor's present favourite township of Adelaide, where cattle have been driven thirty miles to water and where there is near 100 miles of land carriage to a market—and such land carriage!—or else the produce has to go treble the distance by Lake Huron and the dangerous navigation of Lake Erie; and, after all, unless you are on the Lake shore, you may have as much land carriage as there would be in the Newcastle district from Lake Simcoe to Montreal.

To assist you in following my motions I have marked on the diagram —

a. Where I breakfasted on Balsam Lake.
b. Where I slept.
c. Need's.
d. The Indian village.

The upset price of Government, as you know, is 10/-, but I am at present partly in treaty for certain U. E. rights, which I can procure at 3/9 to 5/, and, if I come to any arrangement upon the subject, the cost of my land will be materially diminished. The origin of these rights dates from the Revolutionary—I beg the Yankees' pardon—the War of Independence; when tickets for so many acres were given to the United Empire Loyalists, as they were called, for their services, and to their children afterwards. Thousands of these rights have been bought up and settled, the price in the olden time being somewhere about 5d. or 6d. per acre, and some few yet remain unlocated. The cause of their being so much lower in price than government land is, that, by the grants, they must be settled and ten per cent. cleared in two years, which keeps the speculators in a great measure from purchasing them. A similar condition is annexed to the other lands indeed, but Government is not very strict, except in the case of these rights, against the transfer of which they set their faces as much as possible; to an actual settler, however, such a condition is of no moment.

The mode of location is this:—I go to the Government office, and, upon showing my title, put down the name of my loyalist upon any unoccupied lot I please, and, upon having fulfilled the conditions, I obtain my patent. The titles consist of the original certificates and two Powers of Attorney, the one authorizing me to locate his right where I please, and the other to sell it or do otherwise with it as I think fit. Sometimes, but not often, a little difficulty occurs in taking out the patents, as in a case at present before the Government. A man located a lot in the name of William Smith; but as it appears that, out of the three William Smiths remaining upon the list, two forfeited their rights in the late war, Government decline giving the patent until it is proved which is the true Simon Pure; which may be somewhat difficult, since all the three

Williams are dead. I am prepared however, to run the risk, as such cases are very rare, and as it is also customary for the seller to enter into a bond to bear you harmless in case of the patent not being given and my man is a very substantial and respectable man in the Province. Still I am not certain yet whether we shall agree about price, etc, the difficulty lying in the legal documents and who is to bear the expense of them. I shall not, I think, make any purchase at the next sale; but I will attend it, at any rate, to see how things are going. Immediately after the sale I mean to proceed up the Lakes again to inspect some of the situations more minutely, which I shall be able to do now, as I have taken a copy of the government surveys, by which, with the assistance of a compass, I can find out exactly what lot I am upon—a very difficult matter before, and, as I shall pass through York before the next sale, and shall there get permission to look over the surveyor's field notes, I shall be more prepared with knowledge of the nature of the land I am buying than I can be now.

APPENDIX TO THE LETTER OF AUGUST 2ND DATED AUGUST 23RD

I must apologize *in limine* for the wide interval between my two dates, but the fact is, that expecting soon to return, I left this letter in my trunk at Cobourg and have only rejoined it yesterday.

I did not make any purchase at the sale of the 6th inst., though there was no opposition to most of the bidders, and my plan of going up the lakes was delayed partly by the weather and partly by the prolonged absence of a certain Quaker, by name Hunter, who had agreed to accompany me—so we did not set out until the 16th. In the meantime I employed myself in excursions into the country round about [Peterborough apparently], and in assisting my late Westmoreland fellow traveller[*] to find a cleared farm, and, when the rain confined me to the house, in reading certain French, German and Greek books which belonged to a young man of Dublin University.

On the 16th, Mr Hunter and I with a Mr McAndrew set off and walked eleven miles to the bottom of Chemong Lake where we borrowed a boat across to the Indian village. No guide, however, was to be procured, but we at last induced James McQue,[†] a halfbreed, the interpreter of the tribe, to take us up to his father's, about five miles further, but here the whole family were out hunting, so we finally agreed to borrow his canoe and paddle ourselves. I was the only one who had ever been in a canoe I believe, certainly the only one who had ever paddled, so I took the steering department, and with one or other of my companions in front we reached Bob Cajwin at sunset. On Pigeon Lake we had to work up against a high wind, and, as keeping a canoe steady even in a calm is no easy matter, I can assure you it was hard work. We slept at Sawers' whom we had met going down to Peterborough, and slept very comfortably upon his floor. 17th. We paddled across the lake to Darcos's, of whom we borrowed a boat, which, as it had a sail and as McAndrew and I are both pretty good hands at an oar, was a more comfortable mode of conveyance; thence we crossed to Need's and borrowed an axe, and about ten set off up the Lake.

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[*] A fellow traveller on the ship, coming out.

[†] This name is spelt in these letters both McQue and McGue. The uncertainty may have been with the copyist. The writer, however, in a note on these lakes written many years later, spelt the name McCue. Mrs Stewart, in *Our Forest Home* speaks of Billy McKue. It is possible that the half breed family did not spell their name at all, but caught it by ear from their white progenitor and his name may have been the more usual one McHugh.

The first place we made for was *f* [a place Need wished them to "locate"], but notwithstanding my compass and maps, I believe we found the wrong place; however, in a mile's incursion back into the woods, we found nothing worth looking at.

We found it almost impossible to ascertain our exact position, for the blazes which denote the lines of the lots and concessions are obliterated by time—if they were ever properly marked. We landed again to dinner just round Sturgeon Point, at a spring which the Indians had shewn me, and then crossed the Lake to where the word Fenelon is written, where Mr. Hunter has some land which he wished to look at. Here we spent an hour or two in the woods, and then made a hard push for Cameron's Falls. After having ascertained that the falls were even more beautiful than before, I conducted my companions to the shanty through the woods, which we found deserted; however we took possession, and after considerable rummaging discovered a barrel of pork and of flour and a frying pan, in which we baked a cake, having spread a bed of cedar boughs we retired to rest, and I for one knew nothing of the miseries of this wicked world till the sun had been long risen.

18th. By nine we had breakfasted, taken a look at the beauties of the place, and joined our boat again below the falls. We first landed on our return at *e*, where Mr. Hunter and I made a long excursion back and found some excellent land, rising considerably though gently back from the lake, and moreover discovered the mouth of a creek which even at this season had plenty of water. This I determined to buy. We then crossed over to his land, followed up a creek there for about a mile through indifferent land, and having dined again at our spring and landed at what we believe to be the real *f*, we reached Need's to sleep, and *next day* proceeded on to Peterborough. Tuesday the 30th was the sale at which Mr. McAndrew, who will be a pleasant neighbour, bought land at *g* opposite Sturgeon Point, and I bought about 300 acres where the dotted lines are at *e*, including the creek, which McDonell, the agent at Peterborough, who knows the country well, tells me has a fall of 20 feet, a good mill site. This I certainly did not see myself, but, from the high land behind and the body of water in the creek, there must be something of the kind, though perhaps not convertible to much use for a mill, where Cameron's Falls are so near. For one lot of 115 acres containing the creek I was bid up to 14/, the other two of 126 and about 40 or 50 acres I got at 10/-. Besides this I have bought two U. E. rights of 200 acres each at 3/9, one of which I have resold at a profit of £12 10, and the other I have located immediately adjoining my other land but in the township of Verulam. If B— [a friend, who came out on the same ship], from whom I have never heard, proposes to settle beside me, he can get a lot on my south.

Now for my future plans. I am now on my road to York to pay my instalments, thence I go to Lake Simcoe to learn what B— is about, and I expect to be in Peterborough before the 2nd September. I shall then contract to have ten or fifteen acres cleared and ready for the crop in the spring and make another contract for a house to be built before winter and shall

immediately go up and take possession. I mean to do all by contract, keeping no labourer of my own till spring, the wife of one of the contractors or their men will be sufficient to cook and wash for me, and my own time will be fully taken up in superintending the workmen, surveying the capabilities of my land, and making the interior of my house comfortable after it is built, and beautifying the outside with something of a garden. The clearing, I expect, will cost me about twelve to fifteen dollars an acre, probably not more than the first sum, as a good deal of it will be paid in pork and flour. As to the house I cannot say what it will be as I hear so many opinions, and indeed have not yet finally settled its nature and dimensions. No two people give the same advice. Some say a shanty is good enough, others talk of log, frame, stone and brick houses. Franklins, cooking and common stoves, and chimneys of different constructions, have each their advocates. I incline myself to the regular routine, a wigwam the first week, a shanty till the log house is up, and the frame, brick or stone house half a dozen years hence, when I have a good clearing and can see which will be the best situation.

A Letter to a Friend

Cobourg, Aug. 23, 1833.

In conformity with my promise of writing to you as soon as I had fixed on the spot where I am to spend my life, I seize the first vacant moment since my purchase to inform you that on Tuesday last, the 20th Aug., between the hours of eleven and twelve, I became, for the first time in my life, a Lord of the soil.

Now look at the map of Upper Canada. Do you see the Bay of Quinté, upon which Kingston is situated? Well—the river Trent runs into this bay as you will see, and, if you will take the trouble to follow it up for some twenty or thirty miles (which you must do on foot, for it is not navigable), you may then get into a boat and sail up into the Rice Lake. You will admire it very much for the beauty of its banks and islands, though at this season of the year the wild rice beds give the lake itself more the appearance of a grass plot than a sheet of water, but I would not advise you to stay long admiring the scenery or you will probably catch the ague; but go at once to the town of Sully (where you will find one house), whence you may take a steamer which will carry you twenty five miles up the river Otonabee to Peterborough.

After the specimen of Canadian towns which you will have seen at Sully and at two others on the river—Howard containing a shanty, and Cambleton* a log house without windows—you will be surprised to find Peterborough a very pretty, picturesque thriving village, with about 2,000 inhabitants and near thirty genteel families within visiting distance; but you will be more surprised to find that in 1825 scarcely a dozen white men had ever trodden the woods where it stands.

From hence you may continue to ascend the river and will enter some very beautiful lakes, but, as the Otonabee is scarcely navigable for canoes above the town, I would recommend you to turn your face towards the N.N.W., and walk six miles till you reach the Chemong or Mud Lake at Bridgenorth (Population 1). This individual will lend you a boat which you may row five miles north to the Indian village.

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* See *ante* p. 8 (note)

Of course one so well acquainted with Uncas, Chingachgook, Magua, etc., knows what to expect in his Indian guide; but, nevertheless, you will be surprised again, upon being introduced to Stephen Elliot, James McQue, Joe Bullfrog, Joe Muskrat or any other of the fraternity, to behold a handsome young man with long black hair, dressed respectably in hat, shirt, coat, waistcoat and trousers, and with all the other outward and visible signs of a Christian man. Even my most respectable friend Capt. Nogy, the chief, I will engage shall not at all remind you of the great Sagamore of the Mohicans. They are all a most peaceable, sober set of men; I doubt if any of them ever saw human blood, except old Bedford who killed his wife but that, as he says in excuse, was a long time since. I cannot, however, say as much for their industry, some of them would sooner fast twenty four hours than take the trouble to cook a meal. All this and more you will have had time to observe before any of the aforesaid gentlemen will have made up their minds whether they will take you up or not.

However I will suppose you in a canoe, moving lazily up into Pigeon Lake, and thence, through the rapids called Bob Cajwin, into Sturgeon Lake. I forgot to say that at the rapids you passed the town of Verulam (Population 0), but on the Lake you will find six settlers. Certainly this is not many, but then four of them have been at an University, one at the military college at Woolwich, and the sixth, though boasting no such honours, has half a dozen silver spoons and a wife who plays the guitar.

Now look at the map again. You will observe that the Sturgeon Lake runs east and west for about ten miles and that it then divides into two branches, the one running south leading into a settled township called Ops, the other leading north towards Cameron Lake. Up this last you will please to sail along the eastern coast for about two miles, when you will see a stony beach lined with cedar, hemlock, birch and pine, and immediately behind that the brighter foliage of the oak, maple and basswood. If you look very narrowly at this shore, in about a month, you will see a very small clearing, and near a brook you will perceive a wigwam composed of birch bark and cedar boughs. Pray step on shore and walk in; you will find an old friend who can at any rate promise you some salt pork and unleavened bread, with a cigar and a glass of whiskey, and it is more than probable that a fine bass or maskinonge, fresh from the Lake, or a couple of wood ducks, as fat as ortolans, may be added to the repast; who knows whether a haunch of venison or a sirloin of bear may not be forthcoming. A fire before the entrance of the wigwam will serve the triple purpose of giving warmth, light to eat your supper, and of keeping off the mosquitoes, and a bed of cedar boughs, with a buffalo robe for a covering, you will find no despicable lodging. This and a welcome is all I can offer you; but in the morning I will lead you through the woods to see all the wonders of my estate. You shall behold a swamp, into which however you cannot penetrate till the frost gives you firm footing; you shall see a beautiful hill gently sloping down to the lake and from which there is a beautiful view—if the trees were out of the way—and where a mansion will some day stand; and a brook—or creek as we call it—which will be the site of a mill. Then I will take you to an old settlement of the Mohawks, who were massacred about fifty years ago by the fathers of your respectable friends Joe Muskrat, Joe Bullfrog, etc. After this I will paddle you in my canoe to Cameron Falls, about six miles off, where you may see Niagara in miniature; the fall is only twenty-two feet high, but the body of water is very great and the shape exactly that of Niagara.

Here, before winter, you may meet another Liverpool acquaintance. I don't know whether you knew a tall, short-sighted Irishman by the name of Jameson, who used to pull in one of the boats.* I remember him by sight only. He has made a very large speculation in land here, amongst the rest the lot in which the Falls are situated, and proposes building mills there.

Beyond this all is wilderness, though the speculators have bought a good deal of land. Jameson, if he comes to settle this winter, will be both my nearest and my last neighbour. At present, I am the pioneer of the township, for, though Jameson has begun a clearing, it is deserted again, and I fear I shall have no one there till spring. But, as soon as the ice breaks up in the spring, a steamboat will pass my door, and who shall say that I am then beyond the precincts of civilization?

When this steamer, which will be finished next week, can get through the locks now building at Bob Cajwin, I shall have only six miles of land carriage to Peterborough, and thirteen from the Rice Lake to Cobourg, to bring me upon Lake Ontario. I shall then be in *uninterrupted* water communication with upwards of 150 miles of coast, along these back lakes and rivers. Yet, with all these advantages, I got a block of excellent land, with half a mile frontage to the lake, and with a mill site* upon it, at a price averaging 8/ an acre. Land which has far less advantages is now selling at £5 an acre; the very mill site alone if near Peterborough, would sell for much, much more than I gave for all the land. *If* it was near Peterborough, you will say—but, I answer, land near Peterborough might, three years ago, have been bought at even a less price, and why should not land on Sturgeon Lake increase in value as well as on the Otonabee. Good land, in good situation, is now getting very scarce, and, when the new lands are all bought up, the old ones must rise rapidly in price.

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* At Cambridge.

All these speculations as to the rise of land are *entre nous*, though I am convinced of the eligibility of my situation, I will not talk of it till it comes to pass; but bear in mind that the 16th lot in the Xth, the 16th and 17th in the XIth concessions of Fenelon, and the 17th in the Ist of Verulam, containing 500 acres, more or less, only cost £200, and ask five years hence what they are worth.

I don't know of anything else that would prove very interesting to you from this quarter of the globe, lots and concessions being the only subject of conversation here.

To his Mother

Peterborough, Sept. 12, 1833

So soon after the date of my last I do not know whether I should have written again if three circumstances had not combined to induce me to such a step.

First, that before the end of next week I shall be a dweller in the woods, and consequently, as chairs and tables are scarce articles there, I may not have conveniences for writing a letter for a month to come; secondly, that I yesterday received a letter from you; and lastly, that at this hour of half past ten, I find myself sitting by the fire with nothing to do, and I know, from dire experience, that, unless I sit up till one or two to get very, very sleepy, the fleas will have commenced their attacks before I get fairly asleep and then there will be little rest for me, for when once they begin they come on in such armies, that even in the dark I have caught a dozen or two in the course of the night.

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* Water was still the available source of power

[The letter describes how, after finding that his friend B— was settled, the remaining days of August were consumed at York in waiting on the slow process of getting his "papers" for the land he had purchased. The time was partly filled in by a visit to Niagara by means of] a steamer which, after coasting to the head of the Lake and landing us for two or three hours at the pretty village of Hamilton, reached the town of Niagara at nine o'clock, whence a stage carried us to the Falls, where we arrived at midnight. The inn was completely full and it was with difficulty I could obtain permission to sleep on the floor. At five o'clock I was up and walked down to the Tablerock, etc. [Pleasure seeking was laborious even then when people were not in a hurry. We need not follow him about the Falls, though the description with which he "paid the forfeit of having seen Niagara" as it was then, has some historical interest. It was September 3rd before he got back to Peterborough.]

Arrived at Peterborough I commenced enquiries for choppers, but, as no decent men could be found, I was advised to wait a week till the harvest was fairly over

and the poor settlers were ready to leave their farms for a winter's job. Accordingly I set out with my former companion McAndrew for Sturgeon Lake, intending to spend the time usefully in looking at our land again and fixing upon the points for building our houses and commencing our clearings.

September 5th. Having got my papers prepared, I sent them off to York and started for the Mud Lake which we reached just in time for our new steamer's first trip. Of course, on a lake on which nothing but Indian canoes had been heretofore seen, we could not expect a magnificent steamboat, but I must confess I was considerably disappointed with her working. She is built like a scow, that is, to be more intelligible to you, very much after the shape of a wash tub, a small draught being the principal object. Her accommodations for passengers are by no means bad, she carries sixty tons of goods and can go at six or seven knots an hour. All this sounds very well, but unfortunately her steam is exhausted directly, and I am afraid she will never do much good till she gets new boilers. However this was the first trip and we laboured under many disadvantages. The water is just at the lowest point and the Captain hardly knows the best channels, owing to which circumstance we stuck in the mud for an hour, during which we broke our pump and had therefore to stop every now and then, for near an hour, to pump the boilers full again by hand, add to which that our wood was quite green, and, until we stopped to cut down a few cedars the second day, we never had a decent fire, and consequently had to stop an hour or so sometimes to wait for more steam.

✓As we approached the Indian village there was a curious scene, every living soul turned out upon the shore, shouting "Shemong, Shemong" (canoe), and receiving us with repeated discharges of firearms, which we returned with three cheers and as good a salute as we could muster. We stopped here awhile and the Indians were invited on board, to the number of about thirty men and half a dozen squaws. Mr. Tupper, formerly an Indian trader, now a storekeeper in Peterborough, was fortunately on board and acted as master of ceremonies. He is a nice little man and a great favourite among the Indians, who call him "Shosh," which, being interpreted, I found, to my astonishment, means "a little bird passing rapidly between you and the sun" by which is meant that he is what the Yankees call "pretty considerable spry." About three dozen wine glasses were produced and handed to each, according to his rank, with some appropriate speech, but, as we only had about half a bottle of port on board, the quantity was increased and the quality not deteriorated by the admixture of a bottle and half of brandy. I was introduced in great form to Nogy and Bill Crane, the two chiefs, and then they were taken to view the wonders of the engine room. With all our guests on board we proceeded on our journey into Buckhorn—Lake shall I call it?—Swamp were a better word,—where we were to pass the night and discharge some of our passengers. As many of the Indians as their canoes would carry left us here, but a considerable number, with the squaws, encamped on shore, with whom I spent an hour or two, watching their proceedings. It was a curious scene. The night was beautiful though frosty, and the Aurora formed a bright arch across the zenith, the northern

part filled with streamers, changing their lines and forms every moment, and underneath, round a blazing fire, sat about twenty Indians, the men lounging about, some dozing, some smoking, whilst the squaws were engaged in washing potatoes and putting them into a huge boiler, or twisting and tearing off lumps of venison which were added to the mess.

In the morning I bought a canoe and amused myself, for three or four hours, in paddling amongst the numerous low islands, until about ten o'clock the steamer was ready to start, but, though the distance is not much more than twelve miles, we did not reach Bob Cajwin till dark;—or rather, as it should be called, Bob-cajion unk, though it generally goes by the former name or the familiar appellation of Bob.

7th. Early in the morning McAndrew and I borrowed Capt. Sawers' boat and performed a pretty hard day's work, rowing upwards of thirty-five miles and scrambling through the bush not far short of ten; but what made it worse was that from half past five to nine o'clock in the evening we had nothing to eat but two small biscuits, one for tea and the other for dinner. To this sad fare we were reduced by Capt. Sawers who obstinately refused to give us any pork or flour or even to lend us a pot in which to boil some potatoes we had begged,—to punish us, as he said, for coming unprepared from such a land of plenty as Peterborough to sponge upon the poor backwoodsman at Bob. We first landed at the mouth of my creek and pushed on, along its course, for about a mile, through an almost impassable cedar swamp,—not so much impassable from the wet as from the thousands of trees which encumber the ground in every direction, sometimes five or six deep, in every stage of decay.

To you, I dare say, a swamp conveys no very pleasant ideas, but I look upon that bit of land as the best I have, in the first place the cedars (though not red cedar) are very valuable for posts, rails and sundry other purposes; there is at least a foot of vegetable matter at the top and a good alluvial soil at the bottom, and there cannot be any difficulty in draining it. If the creek were cleared from the decayed trees, which choke it up everywhere, the fall is such that it would drain the land without any further expense, and this will not be difficult, for, if a cedar swamp is well chopped and the fire put in at a good time, it will not leave a particle of inflammable matter behind, indeed it only burns up too much. The cedar stumps, it is true, will not rot out in two or three generations, but, if fire is put into them in a year or two, they will burn down below the surface and leave you perfectly clear meadow land, though certainly ill adapted to the plough, and for the former purpose such land is for other reasons the most proper, as in spring and autumn it will be liable to flood.

We next landed at a pretty point, attracted by the sandy beach, which is rather a rare thing along these lakes, and found excellent land close down to the shore; but what pleased me better, we stumbled upon a brook, running merrily over a gravelly bottom, the mouth of which is imperceptible from the lake. Where it comes from and whether it may not be another mouth of the former one I cannot tell, for the ground was covered with a kind of nettle, growing very high, which, though not so painful as our English nettle, made nothing of stinging through our trousers. Near this is to be my shanty, there being every advantage; dry and good

land, excellent water, a sandy beach for my canoe, and a fine open view down the lake.

My land at any rate is well watered, for, besides the two larger streams, on my former journey I discovered a small one, which may indeed be the same as this last, but, where I crossed it, it was running in an opposite direction; but in my next letter I shall be able to give you a better account of the topography of my land.

Again we landed and went back on another part where there is a hill, which will undoubtedly be the situation for a house, some dozen years hence, if matters prosper with me. But now comes the worst of the business. In surveying a township the surveyor only marks the boundary lines and the concession lines, which in Fenelon run north and south, and, as my shore runs in the same direction, of course my boundaries are the side lines, which are merely imaginary lines which none but a surveyor can find; so that I am in the most pleasing uncertainty whether any of these three points is in my land. By guessing at the distance from Sturgeon Point and Cameron's Falls, and by the bearing of a creek on the opposite side of the lake, I thought that I could find my front, which is a mile in extent, and my creek I considered an infallible guide, but since I have found two where only one is marked, I begin to doubt whether the cedar swamp is not to the north of me. Again, if that is really my creek, the hill is so near my other boundary that I dare not begin clearing there, and as for the other creek,—I yesterday found out a nasty little broken front of ten or twelve acres, barely perceptible on the map, which comes exactly in the middle of my frontages and which I vehemently suspect to be the identical spot where the creek falls into the lake. This however I will buy on Tuesday, at all costs, and then I think I may be certain of being on my own land.

After leaving my part of the lake, we crossed to search for McAndrew's land, but, after a three hours' search, we could not even find the boundary of the two townships, such is the uncertainty in which we poor pioneers are left. I have since seen the surveyor of Verulam, who will be up there next week, and has promised to mark the boundary. This will set McAndrew at ease, but, as to me, the running of my lines will be a tedious and, I am afraid, an expensive job, and at any rate he has not time to do it now, being engaged to lay out the town at Bob-cajon-unk, which is to be called St. Albans.*

After toiling through the woods in all directions in search of a blaze, tired, hungry and mosquito-bitten, McAndrew and I sat down in despair under a cedar, woefully contemplating a ten mile row home against a confounded wind which had sprung up right in our teeth, and, by way of getting home the faster, both most unintentionally fell fast asleep, the consequence of which was that we had to go down the rapids in the dark, which we accomplished without touching a rock, a thing by the bye which I never yet could do by daylight.

The next morning (the 8th) we took the precaution of getting a good breakfast before starting and of begging a slice of bread of one of the workmen, and, it being Sunday, we took two of Sawers' men to help us to pull up on a second blaze hunt, but devil a bit of anything could we find, though, in a long push back through the woods, we must have crossed the line several times. We found out its situation, however, within a hundred yards or so, from the bearings of the opposite shore, so that McAndrew has the pleasure of knowing that, if his house is not on his own land it is at any rate not more than twenty or thirty yards on his neighbour's

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* The survey, as Mr. Need notes in *Six Years in the Bush*, took place a month later, on Oct. 6th, but the place was not called St. Albans. The village was laid out, apparently by the Government, in connection with the work of connecting Sturgeon and Pigeon Lakes by a canal. In the following year, on July 16th, 1834, when the Lieutenant-Governor came up to view the works, he named the settlement Rokeby, the name still commonly used for that part of the village of Bobcaygeon.

Next morning, the 9th, we arranged to return with Athill (one of our settlers) in his canoe, and were to start at six o'clock, but as he very kindly got up at five, and was a mile on his road when we went into his room to call him, we were left once more in the lurch However we found a workman, more hospitable than his master, who gave us a breakfast, and another who lent us a leaky canoe in which we embarked, leaving our friends to enjoy their joke, and having at least gained this much experience,—that no one should trust to friends, in the woods, for such indispensable articles as provisions and a canoe

As we carried an extra cargo of a hundred weight of water,—of course the wind was in our teeth,—what with that and stopping to bale from time to time, we were five good hours up to our knees in water in paddling eight miles to McQue's, where we succeeded in getting his son to take us down in a dry canoe But, as fate would have it, when we had a prospect of dry feet, the rain commenced and lasted till we reached Peterborough at dark. The sole subject of our conversation for the last mile was the pleasures of a hot supper and a bottle of ale Alas! on our arrival the ale was finished and a cold fowl all the eatables in the house, to a leg of which we had just helped ourselves, when a hungry Yorkshireman entered and most unceremoniously transferred the remainder to his plate. However some bread and butter and a bottle of mulled wine put us in spirits again, and we retired to bed to wish ourselves back in the woods, where at any rate there are no fleas.

Ever since I have been here I have as yet secured no choppers but expect to do so to morrow. My provisions and other necessaries are all ready and for stock to my farm I have procured a kitten and am looking out for a goat for milk during winter. On Wednesday, *Deo volente,* I mean to sleep at Need's, and on Thursday (19th Sept.) under a cedar on my own land. For the present I must give up my pen hoping to get to sleep soon enough to cheat the fleas, if my cold feet will allow me, for my fire has been long out and the nights are already getting abominably frosty.

To his Father

Peterborough, Oct. 31, 1833

I am much obliged to you for the fishing tackle. I fear that much of it will be of little use to me upon our lakes, neither salmon nor trout making their appearance so high up, but the lines at any rate will be useful to me, and the rest perhaps to fishers on the lower lakes.

Our fish are the bass, the maskinonge—a most excellent species of pike, as fat almost as an eel—and the eel itself, the sunfish I believe we have, but I have never seen nor tasted any; the whitefish abound above and salmon trout below. The bass is our staple commodity, and a most excellent one it is, if you are on the lake, tie a line, baited with a piece of red cloth, round your wrist and proceed on your journey, and it is ten to one that, before you have got a quarter of a mile, you will feel your prize. In some parts of the lake if you are short of meat for dinner, you may put the potatoes on to boil and, before they are done enough, you may have ten or twenty bass on the grid iron. Maskinonge and eel are generally speared, a very difficult matter till one has studied the laws of refraction a little. I have bought some seine twine and mean to net a net this winter which I expect will supply me pretty well with fish next summer; and I do not know whether it may not be worth while to take up an old pork barrel with the brine to Lake Kinashgiagiquash, some vacant week in the summer, and bring back a cargo of whitefish, which, salted in that manner, are almost as good as herrings. At any rate I cannot afford salt pork at present prices; I am selling it to my choppers at £4 12-6 p. barrel of 200 lb., and I do not make a half penny by it.

For game—we have abundance of venison, which is becoming more plentiful as the clearings increase, affording them more food and driving off the wolves; you may buy it of the Indians at 1½d. p. lb., and sometimes for less. Partridge and rabbits are pretty plentiful, but the former difficult to get without a dog. Ducks, in thousands and tens of thousands, frequent the rice beds at the mouth of the Scugog, about four or five miles from me. These, together with a bear, two wolves, martens, racoons, muskrats and squirrels, are my only acquaintances as yet.

In a fortnight or so I hope to send you a parcel myself, by some private hand, in return for yours; its principal contents will be some maps of the Newcastle

district which I am publishing, partly with a view to profit and partly to benefit the district I am pretty certain not to lose and expect to make a profit of £10 or £15, at any rate I have the merit of setting a good example, for as soon as my map was in the press government gave orders for similar maps of all the districts to be published The plan is to have all the townships marked and the lines of the lots indicated. Such maps of each district are to be seen at the Surveyor's office upon payment of 1/3, so you may suppose that the clerks, to whom the fee comes, throw every imaginable impediment in the way, and they at first refused to give my printer the copies, even when he shewed them the positive order of the Governor to that effect.

I believe I have now fully answered your letters and may go on with my journal from somewhere about the 12th September

I believe I added, as I was leaving Peterborough, that I had been detained by the expected arrival of the Governor Indeed the whole town was in as great a ferment as if His Majesty himself had been expected. Militia men turned out and the guard mounted before a loghouse, dignified with the name of Government House By the bye, the said house is so full of bugs that they dared not invite his Excellency to sleep in it and had rigged up a tent near it, under which his bed was prepared However, as I said before, Col. Brown and his men were parading about for two days, and one whole day was spent by nearly half the town in erecting a flagstaff The second day it was considered certain he would come, and we all, except one or two cunning ones, put on our clean shirts, etc. Troopers were galloping about in all directions, watching all the avenues by which the enemy might approach, and a man was stationed on an elevated point, with orders to keep his eyes fixed on the bridge and to fire a shot the moment the great man crossed it. At last, about noon, every thing was ready; the colonel had drawn out his forces so as to make the best possible show, the dozen who had uniforms being posted in conspicuous situations, and a reserve of ragged Irishmen being drawn up behind the cow house to fire a salute. And, after all, they ended by saluting our parson, or rather his horse; for the reverend gentleman, finding the animal which had been sent forward to bear the honoured weight of the Governor, mounted him and rode forward with the news that he was not coming at all. Some of the officers, who had their uniforms on, were very indignant; those who had made everything ready to slip them on at a moment's warning laughed, but as for our worthy little Colonel—for a full minute it was doubtful whether he would not cry. Mr McDonell, the government agent, bore it with the greatest philosophy,—he merely observed, "Well, well, then we'll eat the little pig ourselves." Nevertheless it was no small inconvenience to me, for the boat was stopped to carry the Governor up our Lakes, and I could not get off by it after all, for the captain, when he found he had been made a fool of for three or four days, set off in a pet, without giving anybody notice.

Finding I could not get it till Monday the 23rd, I sent enough luggage, to serve for my first settlement, to go on that day, and took that opportunity of going up to Sturgeon Lake on Saturday the 21st with a Mr Mudge of the Navy, who is settled there, and with a Lieut. Hay, R.N., who was on the lookout for land.

The greater part of the day (Sunday, the 22nd) Mudge did the honours of his lake, and in the evening we walked across to little Bald Lake. Both of these are very beautiful, but, notwithstanding their greater vicinity to Peterborough I do not like them as well as my own situation, the land being not so good and they being out of the chain of lakes. The next day they and I walked over to Buckhorn Lake, where we met two Indians by appointment who took us down to Deer Bay or rather Lake where we landed and went back in several places, the scenery is the most beautiful I have seen and the land the worst,—I am afraid they are two things which do not go together.

We had expected to be in time to catch the steamer in Buckhorn Lake, but, in consequence of a deer hunt which kept us some time, we were too late, and had to sleep at a house there. The next morning, the 24th September, we* started by day break in my own canoe, which I had brought up from the Indian village. The mist was so thick I could scarcely find my way to the nearest house on the shore, where we intended to breakfast. Upon arriving there, we found them all ill of the ague, and no eatables, so were obliged to push on to Billy McQue's. There nobody was at home but we took possession, and, thinking the spade looked cleaner than the frying pan, I broiled some venison we had with us on it, finding some ears of corn we roasted them also and made an admirable breakfast. As we were finishing one of the lads came in and offered us some potatoes, which we thinking we had some way to go and as it was already afternoon, accepted; whilst they were boiling we broiled some more venison and after our dinner started again and reached Bobeajion unk pretty early, where we slept on shavings in a loft at Sawers'.

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* Lieutenant Hay and himself

Early on Wednesday morning, the 25th September, I found out the two men I had engaged to chop for me and, upon consulting with them, found that their boat and canoe were insufficient to take up our luggage, so I borrowed a scow and four men at 3/6 a day, from the canal which is cutting, and, after several hard hours work, they got my load up the rapids. About two o'clock they reached Sawers', and thence Hay and I went on in the canoe and had a fire ready for them to cook their dinner at Need's. From thence I got them off about four o'clock, and, as it was a beautiful afternoon and we had a moon, I intended to work at it all night. About five we set off to follow them and overtook them at sunset, when the weather became menacing, and soon after a tremendous thunderstorm came on which forced us to land at the nearest point we could make. This, in the dark, happened to be a swamp —and here I must leave us for the present, endeavouring, for a long time ineffectually, to light a fire.

[The narrative of this expedition is continued in a letter addressed to his sister, dated the same as the previous letter, Peterborough, Oct. 31, 1833. This letter was also received on the same day as the other.]

Having filled the largest sheet I can find to my father with my adventures, and having still more than a month to record, I do not see why I should not kill two birds with one stone and dedicate the continuation to you. I left us, as you will no doubt know before you get this, endeavouring to light a fire upon a little ridge in a swamp by the lake side, and you must now imagine us successful notwithstanding the rain, and fancy Mr

Hay and myself, six men, a woman and a half-starved wretched little baby sitting round the fire, some drying themselves, the rain having abated, and some cooking supper. Here we determined to sleep and, after supper, the woman and baby were put under the boat, Mr Hay and myself stretched ourselves side by side near the fire, with our knapsacks as pillows and my blanket and water proof cloak over us, and the men each crept under a bush or tree as best he could; one poor devil, not knowing how far he was going, had not even brought his coat with him.

As I have mentioned the baby, lest your compassion should be too much excited by it, it may be as well to observe, that though the most miserable puny little creature imaginable a month since, it is now, thanks to the air of the woods, at least half a year older in appearance and more noisy than is at all agreeable.

It rained all night, but, thanks to my waterproof, Hay and I remained dry, but, about three or four in the morning, such a storm commenced that we were obliged to fly for shelter to a hollow tree where, notwithstanding our cramped position, I slept most soundly till day break. It having cleared again a little, we breakfasted and started about seven (26th Sept.), but we had barely proceeded a mile when a storm more awful than any I have seen in Canada commenced, and Hay and I made with all speed for a sandy beach, and there, upsetting the canoe, we crept under and lay there till noon, without ever daring to peep out and see what had become of the scow. I don't think I ever saw such tremendous rain. About noon, having exhausted all our topics of conversation and having slept as much as we could we got tired of our situation and, there being no chance of its clearing up, we emerged from our hiding place and launched our canoe. The scowmen were not far off, under a cedar tree, we roused them up and got once more under way, Mr. Hay and I in the canoe, and the woman and child with her husband in the boat, going on before to my land to light a fire, etc.

There we landed about three o'clock, completely drenched and prepared to light a fire when we discovered that my fool of a man had brought no means of procuring a light. Now I, who, for the last four or five years of my life, never stirred out without tinder and flint and steel in my pocket, happened on this occasion to have left them behind, and, the only gun we had with us being a percussion one, we could get no fire from it; so we were obliged to send the man back in the boat to meet the scow, and, after near two hours vain endeavours to warm ourselves, we at last got a good fire up and supper cooked, just as the scow arrived. The evening having become fine on a sudden and the wind being fair, I determined upon sending the men back in the scow, much against their inclination. Just about sunset, however, the bad weather returned, and, as the poor devils did not get back till three o'clock the next afternoon, they have given me a bad name, averring that I only gave them four meals in three days, which is strictly true, but then they forgot to say that they had already breakfasted the first day and that I offered them at parting as much pork and potatoes with them as they liked, which they in a pet declined. However I have learnt two things from the days' adventures—never to stir twenty yards from my own door without flint and steel, and I have also got a light axe made to carry at my belt, and it has served me many a turn since; the other thing—never to turn any man from my house at night, and God knows I should have been hospitable upon this occasion, as the house I then kept was an open house This same house, to which we retired when the men were gone, consists of three cedars and a butternut, covered with wild vine,—very picturesque truly and very airy, and there it shall stand unharmed, if possible, amidst the general havoc, as a memento of my first landing but as the road line, I find, runs over my very hearthstone, I may perhaps be compelled to have it down

As soon as we had got our suppers, we got the canoe up to the fire and made it our roof I gave Hay, as my guest, my best blanket, my waterproof and the choice of his bed, and I believe he slept pretty well but as to myself my lair was on an inclined plane, so that as soon as I fell asleep I rolled out, and instead of sleeping under the canoe, I slept under the drip of the canoe as the fire had gone out, when I woke about one, and my blanket was very thin I felt considerably cold. I woke up the men and made them get another fire, and for an hour or two I amused myself toasting potatoes at it till I got dry, when I went to bed again and again acted the part of gutter to the roof till morning, though as Hay's snoring kept me a good deal awake I continued to keep up my position rather better than in the earlier part of the night. But I must not grumble at Hay's comfortable sleep, for, though he had the better berth, he caught a cold and I did not.

The next morning, 27th Sept, it really became fine, and, having taken my choppers to show them where to begin, I set out with Hay to show him some land on Cameron's Lake, but, a stiff wind being against us, we thought, when we got to the Falls, there would be no time to cross the Lake, so we returned to dinner and then set off on our return, land hunting as we went A most lovely afternoon compensated us for our fatigues, and we reached Need's to sleep

Here I had intended leaving Hay and returning to my land, but, hearing that the steamer was not coming up and as Hay had no other way of getting down but my canoe, I determined to go down with him, particularly as I could do nothing on my land at present and as I wanted to get up the rest of my luggage And here I remained wasting this precious season of the year, through the delays of the tradesmen, from whom I could get nothing done without continually teazing and urging them on, and partly in waiting for McAndrew and Jameson, my two nearest neighbours, who were detained from the same cause and with whom I intended to get my luggage up.

From the 29th Sept, when I arrived, to the 11th October, when I left Peterborough, I have nothing to record but that, on the 6th, McAndrew and I walked up to Selby,* about nine miles off, the intended site of a flourishing village, and were much pleased with the beautiful rapids, upon which it is built, and that Hay, not being able to get land in my neighbourhood suitable to his wishes, has settled on Sandy Lake; for which I am sorry, as I was much pleased with him.

On Friday, the 11th, we set out to Mud Lake, being obliged to leave many things behind us, and got to the rapids at Bob-ca-je-won unk (that is the spelling I think I shall adopt, *a* and *j* having the English pronunciation) that night. Here McAndrew and I found that the government scow we had intended to use was removed, so we volunteered our services and those of our men to assist Jameson up, if he would lend us his scow afterwards. Accordingly on Saturday morning (the 12th) we commenced unloading her of about seven or eight tons of goods, and got thirteen hands from the works, who, with us eight, had hard work getting her over the fall; above this we loaded her again, when it appears the hands from the canal wanted $16.00 for the whole job of getting her up the rapids, which for three-quarters of a day we thought a most exorbitant charge; so Jameson paid them $4.50 for what they had done, and we all turned into the water, resolving to get her up ourselves; but, after having been an hour working hard up to our middles in the water, we were obliged to give it up, and Jameson had to go over again and cry peccavi; the contractors, like the Sibyl of old, sent us only eleven men but still charged the same $16.00 in addition to the $4.50. We felt ourselves however in their power and were obliged to submit; but we now got up gloriously, as we all, being already wet, continued to help in the water. About the middle however the channel suddenly deepened so much that I was left behind, unless I had taken to swimming. My first notice was seeing McAndrew, who is six feet two, put his watch in his mouth (mine had long been there) and the next moment I was up to the shoulders. Not relishing a swim, I left them and went on to prepare for their reception above, where I lighted a glorious fire in an empty shanty into which I effected an entrance *via* the chimney.

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* Now Lakefield.

The next morning, being Sunday (the 13th), we wasted several valuable hours in shaving and such luxuries, and did not get off till ten—with our own party only—and as we unfortunately struck upon some rocks in the rapids, we had to jump out again; then, the wind being very wintry, there arose a sort of contest who should take the oars to warm ourselves. However, what with the wind and what with our exercise, we were tolerably dry by the time we reached Cedar Point, where we resolved upon camping, about an hour after dark. Here we experienced the wisdom of the Indian custom of encamping before sunset, for it was so dark that we lost much time in procuring suitable wood and were half an hour in getting a light, all our punk being wet in our pockets. At last, with the assistance of gunpowder, we lighted a fire, but to me, as flint and steel bearer, it was at the expense of one whisker and both eyelashes After an excellent supper of stewed duck and potatoes, we slept most soundly, McAndrew and I occupying a bed of cedar boughs near the fire, with a buffalo robe for mattress and another for a counterpane

Next morning (the 14th) we roused Jameson and got him on one and a half miles to my land to breakfast Here McAndrew and I stayed behind looking at my land, and then followed to Cameron's Falls where the scow was unloaded, and with our two men we brought her down, with a fair wind, to my place for dinner Starting again at four, we reached Sandy Point soon after sunset, taking the precaution of calling at Cedar Point to carry away some of the embers, which were still smouldering from our last night's fire

Next morning (the 15th) we were up before daybreak and pulling against a stiff breeze at sunrise. We reached the head of the rapids at ten and left our large scow there, going down to borrow a small scow from the works to bring up our luggage in two or three trips. McAndrew, with four hired hands, undertook the scow, whilst I remained getting a second load ready. Eight times they got round an island out of sight, and as often the current carried them back almost to their starting place, but at last they accomplished it and took up a second load. That night we slept in a bed and were so comfortable that we never were conscious till morning that our shanty, twenty by sixteen feet, contained twenty three other souls.*

On Wednesday morning (the 16th) we got up another load, and, with four extra hands, took the large scow up to McAndrew's to sleep. My man I parted with the day before, nominally because his wife asked too high wages, but really because I found him too old to be of much use as a chopper and too fond of whiskey to be very useful as a trusty servant; and I should have been without a man if I had not accidentally met my old friend Dan'l O'Flynn in the woods, carrying all his worldly property upon his back, consisting of a sheet, a blanket, a Bible and a † as he calls it. I do not remember whether I mentioned this individual in a former letter. The first time I was up the Lakes we observed a disconsolate figure, sitting on the shore, and, thinking that he might be lost, we approached him, he informed us that he was one Dan O'Flynn who, having been clearing his land in the rear for two months, had come down to the lake shore for the chance of seeing a man. Ever since, he has taken me under his especial patronage and has constituted himself my mentor and valet de chambre, requiring me, in re

turn for these favours, to keep his money safe and never let him spend a halfpenny of it.

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* This inn, which was wanting in the first land hunting trips, was evidently built after the settlement was laid out by the Land Surveyor on Oct. 6. (see note p. 32). On that same day, Need says a bid was made for the site of a tavern. This site is later described as a flat rock, and there is a flat rock of the size mentioned above, at the water's edge on the Rokeby side of the river, noted as McConnell's tavern in the cut on p. 173, which is no doubt the tavern floor of solid rock mentioned on p. 56.

† Undecipherable in the original.

It rained all night at McAndrew's, but, by erecting a sort of tent of blankets, we slept pretty dry under our buffaloes. The next morning (the 17th), with two of the extra hands and Dan, I set off for my own land, and, after ranging my luggage under some cedars for the remainder of that day and half of the next, we employed ourselves in cutting a road from the landing, making my chopper's shanty our lodging.

By noon next day (the 18th), I had fixed upon my situation, which is at some distance from the Lake on the side of a hill, the shore being too much exposed and too low.

On Saturday (the 19th), the logs being all cut, we raised the walls, and on Sunday morning I set out with two men in my canoe to McAndrew's, who in the meantime had got on a little faster than I, having no road to cut. After breakfast he and I set out in my canoe to proceed up the Scugog into Ops to buy boards and potatoes. For two or three hours we were employed searching for the mouth of the river, which at last we found—about two and a half miles from where it is laid down in the maps, and, as we had fourteen to go up the river to the mills, it was dark when we arrived there.

The Scugog, for twelve miles of a very circuitous course, is one continued dismal swamp, the banks indeed are covered with trees, but between them, in spring at least, a canoe may pass. For the last two miles there begins to be a decided stream, and for the last an actual rapid between high and picturesque banks. At last it became so dark, and so difficult to thread one's way through the shoal of an unknown rapid that we gave it up, and landing we groped our way through the woods, till we fell in with a path which led us to the Mills, and, there being no tavern, we were received by Mr. Purdy the miller, a Yankee.

Purdy's mills have, I should imagine, the largest mill-dam in the world. It raises the water seven feet and makes a navigable communication, where none before existed, for thirty seven miles back. It destroys seven mill sites and overflows 11,000 acres of land. Last year the dam gave way and the water was six months in running out, raising the waters of our lakes so high that for five weeks Col. Baldwin's mills, forty miles off by water,* were stopped from working. When the dam was mended, the Scugog river had no existence for three months, while the dam was filling. You may form an idea from these facts of the unhealthy and low nature of the land in the townships of Ops and Cartwright.

Next day (Monday the 21st), having bought our lumber and potatoes and arranged for their conveyance down, we returned, shooting ducks by the way, and slept at McAndrew's.

On Tuesday I returned home alone to breakfast and found the roof on my shanty, and on Wednesday we got the walls chinked and my luggage brought up. On Thursday the logs for the other shanty were cut, but for want of help we could not raise it. That same Thursday the 24th October I slept for the first time under a roof of my own.

On Friday the 25th in the morning, Robert Gordon, with whom I fell in by accident and have engaged as my man for the winter, set out in the choppers' skiff, and Dan and I in my canoe, to bring over help from McAndrew's. The skiff contrived to reach him, but Dan and I, after proceeding about one and a half miles, found it quite hopeless for a canoe to live in such a tremendous sea, and were obliged to run for the nearest point where the waves would allow us to effect a landing. Here we employed ourselves in exploring until the wind abated sufficiently to allow us to make another run for my own landing. Robert attempted that night to come over, but after being out two hours, baling with their hats, they were obliged to put back.

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* On Pigeon Creek in the Township of Emily

On Saturday (26th) morning he arrived, rather late, with two hands; but we never should have got the walls up had not the scow with potatoes and the raft of boards fortunately arrived, and even with their assistance we did not get them quite up—though all the heaviest are up and the rest carried to the spot.

On Sunday morning (27th), I set off with Dan and Robert to dinner at McAndrew's with the intention of proceeding here [Peterborough] the next day, but about midnight arrived, with two friends, Mr. Hunter, with whom McAndrew and I went up the Lakes when we chose our land, so I could do no less than accompany him on to do the honours of my own house and up to Cameron's Falls, getting to Need's that night and to Peterborough the following (29th).

To morrow (1st Nov.) at five o'clock I shall be on my way back with all the things I can get up, but there will be some gleanings for McAndrew next week, and the next following we shall probably be shut up for the winter,—so be not surprised if you do not hear of me again for a couple of months. The frost is always very severe, if it will but hold off till my chimney is built I don't care.

My Journal has been so long this time that I have no room for fifty things I had to tell you of my plans, etc At present I can only shortly tell you who are our society My nearest neighbour, at Cameron's Falls, is Jameson, an agreeable, gentlemanly Irishman, a great land speculator who will soon have a town about him I remember him of old by sight in Liverpool, where you will probably see him this winter. The next nearest and my most particular friend is McAndrew, a Scotchman from Elgin, knowing Grant Duff, John Morison, etc. He has been a long time in Portugal Opposite me, and perhaps nearer than McAndrew, is a Mr and Mrs Beaston; but I have seen nothing but their house as yet These are the only Fenelon men In Verulam, on our Lake, are Capt. Warren and Athill of Trin. Coll Dublin; the one a puppyish soldier, the other gentlemanly but never can be agreeable till he gives up punning Opposite them, Mr Fraser of the army, a pleasant man enough, with a little Dutch wife He was shipwrecked in coming out and lost everything Besides these are the three old settlers, Need D'Arcos and Sawers Then in Harvey there are Mudge and Hay, and two Trin Coll Dublin men, King and Evans; King a Jersey man, an excellent scholar and great linguist. Round this place [Peterborough] there are several young men, mostly Scotch and rather wild My next most intimate acquaintance is Joseph Hunter, a Quaker, from Belfast, who lives principally at Cobourg As to ladies, the three Miss Brownes and Miss Crawford are my only acquaintances And now farewell until sleighing time.

To his Brother

From my own house Jan. 9th, 1834

First let me wish you all the compliments of the season, and then apologize for the long period of my silence. My conscience however does not smite me much, as I not only wrote two letters upon the last occasion but gave fair warning that you might expect a long interval before you heard from me again. The post, as you must be aware, does not stop at my door, and it is a long walk to go forty miles through the snow to put a letter in the Post Office at Peterborough. One opportunity indeed I had when I sent my man down, about three weeks ago, but I hastened his departure for the sake of giving him company on his journey, and, though I still had two days' notice, this must serve as my excuse—I had just got into my new house and, as the thermometer stood at ten degrees, I was naturally extremely anxious to put in windows and doors before the cold increased, and, not to mention that I had no table, I had nothing but iron pens, in which the ink froze so fast as to render the writing even of a short note a work of considerable time and labour. However, to drop excuses, I am resolved to be ready for any chance opportunity to Peterborough, though at present in perfect ignorance how this is to reach any civilized portion of the province.

Your letter arrived by my man on his return [from Peterborough] on the day of all others when I least needed such a luxury. McAndrew was spending Xmas time with me; we had worked hard all day, flooring the loft and reducing everything to order; a table had been manufactured out of a door and two empty barrels, a table cloth was airing at the fire, silver forks, mus tard, and such like almost forgotten luxuries were ready to grace it, and last—not least—we were almost longing for bed time to luxuriate once more in the novelty of a pair of sheets. Such were the prospects of enjoyment before us when Robert returned with a handful of letters for each, and a bundle of old newspapers which some kind friend at Peterborough had sent to enliven our solitude. Imagine what an evening we spent. If they had arrived now, when sheets, table cloth, etc., are losing the charm of novelty, and I am sitting alone by my fire, the arrival would have been better timed. But I will read your letter over again and then answer it.

The most important topic in your letter, or at least the one which has run most in my head, is—the advantage and safety of a person in England investing money in Canada, with regard to which, after revolving the matter long in my mind, I have come to the following opinion.

Land, except to one residing upon it and cultivating it himself, can never, for many years to come, be looked upon as a permanent investment, for, from the facility of acquiring a freehold, a system of tenantry can never be introduced, at least with anything like favourable terms to the landowner, and even then it can be by no means common. Purchasing land is only a speculation for the purpose of selling it again, and it is the most profitable and certain kind of speculation that Canada holds out.

Land speculations are of three sorts, all profitable but differing greatly in their natures. The first is confined almost entirely to storekeepers and married men in old and well settled townships, and is the way in which almost all our Canadian fortunes have been made A storekeeper gives a long credit, or an attorney or banker advances money on mortgage to some needy and extravagant farmer, and besides getting a good interest, generally ends in getting possession of his farm at half its value, and then speedily disposes of it to some new emigrant who is frightened of the discomforts of the woods and is glad to give a handsome price for a ready built house and a few acres of cleared land. These speculators know the circumstances of every farmer in the neighbourhood; they find a poor one and lend him money to be repaid when his crops come in, which they generally contrive to secure below the market price The next year he wants a larger advance; the third year, after his crops have come to market, he has perhaps barely enough to buy his winter's stores, he talks of selling his farm, and tries to hold out till the emigrants arrive next year, but the emigrants barely get up the country till June, and before that time he has generally been obliged to sell at any price which the speculator may have the modesty to offer There are no doubt many honourable men engaged in this kind of trade, and a good bargain need not be thrown away from pity to the necessities of the seller, but thus habitually to lie in wait to prey upon the distresses of others is too much like a rattlesnake, waiting for a bird to drop into its mouth which its eye has already fascinated

The second kind of speculation is—purchasing lands in quite new townships, which may frequently be done very cheap, either by contracting for the survey, or by buying of the surveyors, or of individuals to whom lands had been given by the Indians previous to the survey But here there is a risk, as it is often long before a township begins to settle; for instance, this spring there was not a settler in this township, though it had been surveyed upwards of ten years

The third, and only way of speculating I think of practising myself or would recommend to others, is—to watch for a decided demonstration in a township towards settlement, and then go over it, and having ascertained where the best land and best situations are, then to make your purchase The next year, or in two years at most, you may be certain of selling again at double the price, and even if you have bought a lot at hazard, if it is not actual rock or swamp and the situation is good, you are sure of a handsome profit. And observe, that a person who has paid all the purchase money and, not being in want of money, will receive payment by instalments with interest at 6 p ct will always have a preference over others. If a purchaser does not come soon, I am sure it would pay well to clear a few acres, build a small house and put a man to farm it on shares, and then, in a year or two, when the lazy gentry begin to find their way up, you may sell it as a cleared farm

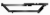
United Empire rights are also sources of considerable profit, but as our sapient Parliament has been legislating about them lately I know not how they may answer for the future. With mine, I mean to sell one hundred acres to an actual settler at a cheap rate, and when I get the deeds out, upon his having done the settlement duty, the other one hundred acres is held by as good a title as any other land My neighbour Jameson is a very large speculator in them and will, I have no doubt, succeed very well

For other modes of investment 6 or even 12 p. ct. may be obtained on mortgage on the very best security

Banks, railroads and public works pay well, but not proportionately as high as in England.

The only permanent investment which strikes me at present as very advisable is that of houses in towns—not in the hundred new towns which are advertised every day in the newspapers, but in a thriving, rapidly increasing place like Peterborough. House rent is enormously dear here; a house which costs £100, built on a town lot of half an acre costing about £25, would be the cheapest house in Peterborough if it did not bring a rent of £25, besides the annually increasing value of the town lot itself. Imagine in Peterborough, which in 1825 was an Indian encampment, land selling at 4/ p. square foot, which about a quarter of an acre did this year.

With regard to the boat of which you offer to make me a present, I am at present pretty well stocked with those modes of conveyance.

My naval department consists of a canoe and a boat; the former of which I mean to sell in the spring and buy another more portable. I decidedly have not yet acquired the true Indian twist of the wrist, but I am a very tolerable hand and can face a very heavy swell or stem a rapid much to my own satisfaction. My boat is undoubtedly the happiest effort of the genius of our boatbuilder; it is light, being built of cedar, rows well for either one or two persons, and, although flat bottomed to suit our shallow shores, will I have no doubt sail pretty fairly by the aid of a leeboard which I am proposing to attempt. She is of considerable capacity too, having brought up six persons, three goats and some luggage from Peterborough. For heavier articles there is now on the stocks, to be finished by the breaking up of the ice, a scow, a joint concern between McAndrew and myself, calculated to carry about three or four tons, which will serve us for some years to come. And what is a scow? I do not know whether the word is English. It is a species of flat bottomed boat of which the ground plan is a rectangle, and this  the side view rather a clumsy machine you will say, more especially if you saw the beams of wood, four inches by three and eighteen feet long, which serve as oars; but a London wherry with spoon oars is not in keeping in the woods; and we have made even such a craft as this carry a ton or two, at the rate of three and a half miles an hour, for two or three hours at a stretch. In such a scow, belonging to Jameson, we have got our goods up from Bob-caje-won unk this year and next year we must do the same, for though the canal is progressing, the whole plan in my opinion is so radically bad that until it is altered entirely the steamer will never get up into Sturgeon Lake. From Peterborough to Bob-caje-won unk our goods are carried up at 2/- p. 100 lbs. and storage at the rapids is 3d. p. 100 lb.; from thence to our own houses we cannot estimate the expense at less than the same sum, even basing our calculations upon our last trip which was our most economical. At half past five I rowed down to McAndrew's and brought him up to Cameron's Falls, altogether about twelve miles, Jameson being absent, we rambled into the bush till he returned, and, after a late dinner, borrowed his scow and started about seven in the evening. Stopping at my house to take in our crew and get tea, we rowed on, a great part of the way through ice, and reached the tavern at the foot of the rapids at four in the morning, very glad to go to sleep on the solid rock which forms the floor of the shanty. All the next day we were engaged in taking up our load by boat to the scow—which we had left at the top of the rapids, about one and a half miles off—and carrying some doors and other awkward shaped articles through the bush. The next day we had one more trip up with the boat and then proceeded with the scow and reached my place before dark, performing the distance from Need's to McAndrew's rather more than seven miles, in two hours Our crew consisted of McAndrew and two of his men, myself and my boy, and of Jameson part of the way down

I give you these details to show you that twelve barrels of flour and a barrel of beef are not got up either without labour or expense. Allowing McAndrew and myself 5/ a day for our work, which I am sure we deserved, the trip cost us about 2/- p. 100 lb, making in all about ½d a pound upon every article which we got from Peterborough But if this extra ½d adds considerably to the cost of pork and flour, what will you think of a most unfortunate cargo of potatoes which we got from Ops, which, besides being frozen on the road, cost us at least 1/- p. bush in freight, not to mention two days lost in going to buy them. I never was very fond of potatoes, but now I have an almost Cobbettish horror of the "Lazy root" Yet a requisite quantity of fat pork cannot be turned down without some vegetable matter to qualify it, and unleavened bread, baked in a frying pan, is but a sorry substitute for bread True I have, or had, thirty pounds of beef, and McAndrew very generously gave me half a bushel of turnips but these are luxuries which I reserve for chance guests or such great occasions as Xmas or New Year's days.

As I am on the subject of eating, you may wish to know how we live in the backwoods. In the summer fish, ducks and venison are rather plentiful, but in winter, that is from November to April inclusive, salt pork is the standing dish for breakfast, dinner and tea, and a most expensive one it is, each member of my establishment consuming at the rate of one and a quarter pounds per day at 6d. p. lb. To make this pork go further I deal much in soups—potato soup is the favourite and is so much relished by my men that it has become the ordinary dish at breakfast. Should you wish to introduce it into your establishment, the following is the receipt. Take a lump of pork and, having peeled fifteen or twenty potatoes, put the whole with an onion into a pot and boil it until it has acquired the desired consistency. You may laugh, but I can assure you my potato soup is so celebrated that McAndrew desired me to bring my boy over one Sunday to teach his cook the mystery of the concoction. My pea soup is not so much admired being merely hard black pease floating about in weak greasy broth. We tried a plum pudding at McAndrew's on Xmas day but it was a decided failure, the currants and suet were scarce, the eggs entirely wanting, and flour by much the preponderating ingredient. We ate it indeed in honour of the day, but it was decidedly bad, however it had the desired effect of making a perfect Esquimaux of poor little Polyphemus, a one-eyed deformity who serves McAndrew in the office of valet, an amusing monster who, in addition to the extinction of his luminary, is marked with small pox, lisps most unintelligible Cumberland and has an unconquerable aversion to the use of a pocket handkerchief. Nevertheless, notwithstanding these our Canadian luxuries I have not forgotten an English dinner, and I am almost ashamed to say that visions do sometimes float before my imagination of the dinners I shall eat when I pay you a visit in Europe, but more especially with Prince Hal in Shakespeare "I do remember that creature, small beer." Before that time indeed I may have become exclusively enamoured of salt pork and wedded to the use of lake water and that detestable stuff Canadian whiskey. Custom does a great deal, as in the case of tea. Being short of sugar, McAndrew and I agreed to stop it to the men, and to set an example gave it up ourselves; and as to milk,—pray never mention the word goats to me—milk was a thing we never dreamt of; but on Christmas we resolved to enjoy ourselves, produced the sugar and sent three men to get a pint from a neighbour, I don't know how many miles off, we tried with both milk and sugar, and then with each separately, but finally unanimously resolved that pure unsophisticated tea is the best.

I have been rather lengthy upon the subject of eating, but without some allusion to that most important function I should have given you but a poor notion of my situation, and moreover because matters of cookery have assumed an additional degree of importance with me from my having officiated as cook myself for three weeks. I certainly did once roast a duck to charcoal, and once burned the peasoup so much it was necessary to give it to the goats, but, upon the whole, when I handed over the frying pan and potato kettle to my boy Willie, I did it with the conviction that nature intended me for a great cook; great, first because I have a genius that way, and secondly because I never could overcome my aversion to washing up dishes, etc.

And now I will leave cookery and eating, having first impressed upon you two economical maxims which I owe to Dan O'Flynn, whom I mentioned in my last letters; first, give your servants plenty of potato soup because, as he elegantly expressed it, it blows them out without much consumption of butcher's meat, and secondly, either allow them very little tea and then they will use less sugar, or give them no sugar and then they cannot drink the tea so strong.

Upon referring back I find that the origin of this culinary dissertation was the expense of bringing up stores, and I may add that this will be most materially diminished when we get our scow, which, being built lighter and on an improved construction, McAndrew and I can take down to Peterborough by ourselves in one day and bring it back in two

The sleighing, about which we hear so much, is I am convinced unpracticable for us who have no beaten track, at least unless the ice most materially improves I have bad experience of it once and do not wish to repeat the experiment About seven in the evening I set [out] to bring home some forty or fifty pounds on a handsleigh from McAndrew's, a distance of four and a half miles, and I cannot have been less than four and a half hours on the road—the last mile, I am convinced, took more than two hours. An unlucky cramp seized one of my legs, which would not hold out more than ten yards without a rest, and when I was ready to start again the sleigh was always frozen to the snow, the worst of it was that I could not keep myself in exercise long enough to keep warm. The articles were too numerous to be carried, and sleigh and all, they proved too heavy, so I had to trudge on as well as I could, for as to leaving the sleigh, I did not like to be

Alexander McAndrew

beaten, and some of the contents were of so savoury a scent—no less a treat than a couple of dozen of red herrings—that I was afraid the wolves would be making free with them. To mend the matter, on my arrival about midnight, I found the fires out and my boy fled to the choppers for protection from the wolves, it being before the introduction of doors into my establishment. From this experiment I have come to the determination never to drag a sleigh again in deep snow, or, if I do, at least to perform my journey by daylight.

Talking of wolves, they are plentiful about, no doubt; McAndrew, who has an open view of the lake, has seen several and I have seen numbers of tracks, but I have never been fortunate enough to fall in with any, though one would have thought that the odour of my Billy goat would have attracted them for miles round.

Your questions as to my neighbours have already been answered. The only one I see much of or care much for, at least when Jameson is away, is McAndrew. I don't know whether I mentioned that he is from Aberdeen awa, and knows Morison and some of Grant Duff's nephews and nieces, though I believe not the gentleman himself. He was many years in Lisbon and has a brother settled there, also a brother in Liverpool whose office is somewhere in Chapel Walks I think. He came out originally with the intention of settling in business in Montreal. He is a very agreeable and useful neighbour. We came up together to look at land, bought it on the same day, have just the same quantity and have the same views with regard to it. All our stores have been bought and brought up together, and so much have all our motions been in concert as yet that I have a notion the good people in Peterborough believe us to be living together. We have almost lived together for this last three weeks and the result has been that, by mutual consent this morning (the 10th), we have agreed never to live so long at a time in one small house again, being aware of our natural infirmities.

As to the parentage, etc., of the rest, about which you enquire—Jameson is, I believe, the son of a wealthy brewer in Dublin, he brought out a good capital, intending to enter into business, but speculated in U. E. rights till he found he had gone so deep that he must become resident himself. Sawers is a silly boy. His father is a Lieutenant of Marines who it seems has married a sister of Don Miguel's friend, Sir John Campbell. Need's father is I suppose connected in some way with that extensive firm of Walker, Parker & Co. whose names are spread far and wide as manufacturers of patent shot.* D'Arcos's father, somebody told me, is or was Mayor of Cork or Londonderry or some such Irish place. Athill's papa is an Irish Dean. Captain Warren I never saw but once. Mr. Frazer was of the 42nd, he is a gentleman and is married to a nice little Flemish wife. I know nothing of his parentage; but he is a Scotchman and poor, and so of course is highly descended. Mr. Wilson is a middle aged man, a very good soul. He is an Irishman, poor, and, they tell me, come of decent folk. I also hear that he ruined himself by endeavouring to procure a separation for a sister from a husband who used her ill He is at present superintending Cameron's Falls for Jameson, in his absence, but will settle here. Next year we are to have a Mr Boyce of the army I believe, of whom Jameson speaks highly, and a Captain Dobbs, an agreeable, gentlemanly, elderly man of whom I know nothing more than that he is reported to be an excellent chess player, and, what is of much more importance, to be the father of six daughters Such is the list of the inhabitants of the townships of Verulam and Fenelon.

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* Need's own account of himself in the preface to *Six Years in the Bush* is that he graduated at Oxford with a view to one of the learned professions but a strong desire to try his fortune in the West came over him, and his friends, though they did not encourage, did not thwart his resolution but gave him assistance which enabled him to carry it into execution, which assistance appears to have been liberal.

Everything else must wait till to-morrow, as my candle will barely see me to bed and my fire has already expired, rather a strange occurrence, you will say, on the 10th of January in this much abused climate, and that too in a house the walls of which are still full of holes, which admit the light by day and wind enough at night to disturb most materially the equanimity of my candle

11th. Before proceeding further I must vindicate this climate from the calumnies that have been circulated against it They say, indeed, that newcomers never feel the cold, if so, it is an illustration of the saying that "God tempers the wind to the shorn lamb" for truly they have to submit to strange lodging. But I maintain that Canada is no colder than England, whatever the thermometer may say to the contrary. True there are other outward and visible signs of cold, the ink freezes in your pen, the lather in your shaving brush, the latch of the door sticks to your hand, and the water has occasionally frozen in my glass at dinner; but, though the average height of the thermometer inside my dwelling is about a degree below the freezing point, I have never been really cold but once, when I

woke last Sunday at Cameron's Falls in the middle of the night and found that McAndrew had stolen the bed clothes.

In the other shanty, in which I spent my first six weeks, a piece of canvas represented a door and a hole in the roof the chimney; windows were unnecessary in such a dwelling, for such were the spaces between the logs that, when you were outside at night and the fire was bright, the shanty bore a striking similitude to a tin lantern*, every motion inside was visible—just such a house as Cato would have wished to live in. My bed consisted of two buffalo skins, one above and the other below, and empty barrels, chests, etc., served the purposes of chairs and tables. Yet in the midst of this I never was cold; and the two colds I have had, in consequence of sleeping in warm houses, never lasted more than a week. Let anybody look at me now, writing without my coat, (for it was only last week I took to wearing a coat at all, and even now I only put it on after dinner) and dare to say that Canada is a cold country.

Having answered all your queries, I must be as concise as possible, as I have to walk down to McAndrew's this afternoon, whose choppers are going to Peterborough to-morrow. My establishment consists of two men, chopping by contract, whose shanty is a quarter of a mile off and one of whom has a wife who washes for me; my man Robert (at eleven dollars per month), who has only to-day fairly begun chopping, having been employed almost wholly as yet in plastering, chimney building, and other odd jobs about the house; and a boy, William, who, besides cooking, carry ing water, cutting firewood, etc., does a good deal of chopping. To these may be added two goats, though I am afraid the number will speedily be reduced to one, as I have been called away from my letter this morning to give surgical assistance to poor Billy, who I think has received his deathwound from the limb of a falling tree, which struck him between the horns. He can walk about a little, and his companion is now most affectionately caressing him and smelling at his wounded head, but I am afraid his case is a bad one. Should he die I will turn his carcass to more use than it ever was when living, by trailing it a mile or two over the Lake and then spend the night by it, wrapped up in a blanket, for a chance of a shot at the wolves.

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* The old fashioned tin lantern was without glass, the light streaming from innumerable small punctures in the tin walls.

Ho sbavato [he appears here to have spilled the ink over his letter]—But there is one advantage of the frost at least—that ink, if spilt, freezes before it can stain much—this looks like an exaggeration, but it is a fact.

It is astonishing what an immense quantity of work has to be expended even upon a small log house before it is habitable. I have kept an exact account of our labours, and do not find, on a review, that much time has been lost; but in looking back at the whole I can hardly comprehend how three men can have been kept constantly at work for two months and a half in fitting up a house and a shanty. McAndrew, having had a carpenter for a month, has decidedly got the start of me in comfort, but, having been burnt out at Montreal, he does not require so many cupboards, shelves and lock up places, to stow away his luggage in, as I do. My almost constant work this winter will be carpentering. I am no great hand at chopping as yet, having

had very little practice, but I am often surprised at the dexterity with which I wield an axe in fine work, such as hewing and squaring logs.

Amongst my evening studies I may reckon an attempt to teach myself Indian, by the aid of a translation of the Testament; but, as I have to form my own grammar and dictionary as I go on, it is no easy task. It is anything but a concise language, as, from some specimens, I had at first imagined: a verse in Indian generally takes twice as many words as in English, and such words! Ten syllables is no unusual length, of which the root itself is perhaps only two, the rest being prefixes and suffixes, and, if I may coin such a word, interfixes, for two or three syllables seem sometimes to be thrust in between the disjointed syllables of the root—but I will tell you more about it in the spring. . . . .

C—— enquires about the resources of the country, on behalf of a Captain Stuart. Without knowing the circumstances, I can only say, in general terms, that some part of Canada may be chosen as an advantageous settlement for everybody; but none, except such as have an independent income—as half pay officers—or actual working farmers, will thrive well in an old settled part. The woods, the backwoods, is the place for everybody who has health and enterprise; and, in point of society, I have never heard of any part, with the exception of Blandford in the London district, and Moore, further west still, which could compare with the back townships in the Newcastle district.

I have had the misfortune to break the main spring of my watch, and, in the absence of the sun, have been reduced to measure time by the consumption of firewood and candle (three-and-a-half inches after dark is my tea time). This uncertainty of time has set me a meditating upon clocks, and many times I have longed for one of those 15/- Dutch clocks which go so well in England. If T—— were coming out, such a thing might be sent with him. If I had a watch I should not now have been writing almost in the dark, with my dinner yet to get and a walk of four-and-a half miles over the Lake yet before me.

My books too I want out; all at least that appear worth the carriage. But above all, I want a companion. I must have a dog or I shall be reduced to introducing poor Billy into the parlour, notwithstanding his odour. A terrier is a good dog and a spaniel is not amiss, but the dog of all dogs for this country—and one which can scarcely be procured at all and then only second rate—is a hound. Only imagine our living on salt pork at 6d. per pound with the knowledge that 200 pounds of fat venison is running about close to, if you had but a hound to drive him into the Lake; and then fancy our longings for such an animal. A foxhound, if he has once been hunted, will not take well to deer, but there are such things as staghounds, which are sometimes to be procured by diligent enquiries. I once mentioned the thing to McAndrew, and he was so much taken with the idea of our each having one that I have no doubt his first enquiry, when I bring this letter, will be, whether I have alluded to the noble animal.

These things, I am afraid, are only delusions of the imagination, but I throw them out as hints for your private meditations. . . .

TO HIS FATHER

York, Feb 3rd, 1834

I found so much inconvenience, in my last letter to William, from writing without any systematic arrangement; the multifarious subjects, upon which I had to treat, led me into such long digressions, that I must return to my old plan of first telling you my personal adventures in chronological order, and then of answering the numerous queries which your long and welcome letter contains.

The first occurrence of any note, since my letter, was an accident of much more importance than that which befell poor Billy, who, by the bye, is recovered. One of my choppers had his arm broken by the fall of a tree. I was at McAndrew's at the time, but upon being sent for returned with him and set the arm. I was the operator, but was very glad to have McAndrew's advice and opinion. The fracture was, luckily, above the elbow, and my patient is now convalescent and, as far as I can see, the arm is as good as ever.

Up to the 22nd of January, with the exception of this accident, I have nothing to record; I was constantly employed in carpenter work and increasing the comforts of my house, whilst the chopping was going on steadily, but the 22nd was quite an era amongst us. I had gone down to McAndrew's to get back some tools, and we were looking down the Lake and admiring its beauties, when we discovered two figures at a distance, evidently a white man and an Indian. Never having been three months in the backwoods without seeing a new face, you cannot enter into our delight, and, if you had seen us looking at ourselves in the glees and capering about the house, you would have taken us for madmen. Our glee indeed was rather sobered when we discovered seven other figures on the opposite shore and began to meditate upon our accommodations. To cut the matter short, the party presently arrived, consisting of Jameson, whom we had imagined in England, Mr. Wilson of Cameron's Falls, Mr. Wallis, a friend of McAndrew's and partner of Mr. Bellingham to whom General Walsh gave me a letter, Messrs. Macredie, McCall and Hughes, three new arrivals, two Indians and a boy—a pretty considerable party for the backwoods. However, as the most of them had blankets, we contrived to lodge them pretty well, and as to eating, a huge piece of beef with turnips (our great luxuries) had been put into the pot when we first perceived them. Any wants in the establishment were easily overlooked, on account of the shameful inhospitality they had met with from our neighbours below. I have hinted already at this fault in our neighbours, but the present case was far worse than any we ever experienced. . . . From this sweeping censure I must except Need in the present instance—he was from home—and D'Arcoe, who is very kind hearted and does not seem to propose turning savage.

The next day the whole party visited me. The day following we moved up to Cameron's Falls and took a ramble over Cameron's Lake. On the 25th we set out for Balsam Lake, which looks even prettier in winter than in summer. Bushwalking in winter is rather hard work, particularly for those who like me could not get their boots on and were obliged to put up with worn out moccasins, which, except for the appearance of the thing, is much the same as walking in one's stocking feet, but a dinner of porcupine repaid us for all our fatigues. It is a most delicious dish, not unlike sucking pig, but with much more flavour. The next day we sent the two Indians on to Purdy's mills, to get us a sleigh on to Peterborough, and we slept once more at McAndrew's. He and I had been sometimes talking of going down to Peterborough for a few days, and we now took the present opportunity of having company on the road.

The next morning early we set out, and so much time was taken up in packing, etc., that most of us got no breakfast. The Scugog being a very winding river, four or five miles are to be saved by cutting through the bush in some places, and the ice being bad, the last three miles are also through the bush. The tracks of our Indians of course were to be our guides, but, there having been a considerable fall of snow during the night, it was often a matter of great difficulty to discover them. You will have some idea of the fatigue of the walk when I tell you that there was near two hours space between the arrival of the first and the last of our party, though the distance scarcely exceeds ten miles——after [all] I doubt whether it is not still more fatiguing in summer.

The rest of our journey to Peterborough was performed in a sleigh, of which I took the dimensions from curiosity, viz., five feet seven and-a-half inches by two feet nine inches into which seven of us and the driver were stowed, and occasionally our two Indians. Considering that McAndrew and Macredie are upwards of six feet two inches by exact measurement and the other four, except Jameson, more than six feet, I think this is a specimen of packing from which Mr Berly might have taken a lesson.

Having staid for a ball at Peterborough, I rode one of Wallis's horses down to this place. My business down here—to get the bonds, etc., of my U. E. rights—has been satisfactorily arranged, and I might return to my fireside again if my friends here did not detain me a little longer. We are in hope of acquiring two new neighbours in persons of McCall and Macredie, and I am remaining here until, having seen the owner of a front lot before some land which we could procure for them, they will decide whether they will purchase or not. In case they do, I am to make arrangements for them for building houses, clearing land, etc., before the spring, when they will come up, making a tour of the west in the meantime. To-morrow will probably settle the matter. They are both extremely desirable settlers. McCall is a young man of some independent income, very quiet and gentlemanly and has been somewhat of a traveller. The other not so well off in worldly matters but very well informed upon most subjects, very good natured and exceedingly amusing from his simplicity and utter ignorance of the wickedness of this world, which in a person six feet two and-a-half inches and upwards is more particularly ridiculous. He is acquainted with the Hays, as is also Wallis. Hughes, who is not with us here, is a Cockney and very amusing in his way—has been in Italy, at Sorrento, etc., etc.; a great admirer of the French and French philosophy, without a particle of anything in him deserving the name; very sentimental, but withal an agreeable person, a German scholar moreover and a chess player. He is not yet decided as to his location, but it appears not improbable that he may buy some of my land and increase our neighbourhood still more. Wallis, who brought them all up to us, is quite a first rate person but I will say no more of him as you will see him in Liverpool soon and judge for yourself He is a much more decided person than Jameson and is not likely to disappoint me again, in fact I believe he is going to establish a house in Liverpool, in connection with that at Montreal, and has offered to be instrumental in forwarding my parcels, etc, for me *

To-day, (the 4th), I have been to see our provincial Parliament, who certainly are not an imposing body and do not seem to be more celebrated for talking to the point than their prototypes at home, but in one thing they have effected an improvement upon our English forms, when a division takes place, the Ayes stand up in their places and a little boy calls out their names in order, each sitting down as his name is called, the Clerk at the table taking their names down; the same is repeated with the Noes, and the lists are then handed to the Speaker, who declares the majority Another plan is good —each member has his own seat with a small desk before it.

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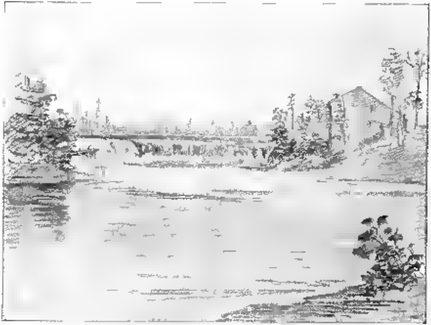
* James Wallis, later of Merino, Peterborough, became a life-long friend He came to Canada in 1832 and engaged in a mercantile business in Montreal This first visit to Cameron's Falls was no doubt preliminary to a partnership with Mr Jameson which was arranged soon afterwards. Together they built a saw mill at the Falls. Mr Wallis at the same time purchased eight or ten thousand acres in the township of Fenelon The mill continued in operation until 1858 when it was burnt down. Mr Jameson was seldom at Fenelon Falls, and he returned before long to Liverpool and died there. Mr Wallis though he kept his house at Fenelon Falls did not reside there continuously after 1840 when he took a house in Peterborough The superintendence of the mill was in the hands of Major Maclaren. Merino, Mr Wallis's residence at Peterborough was built in 1851, when he married Miss Forbes, daughter of Commander Robert Miller Forbes, R.N., who settled in Peterborough about 1827 His first wife, who was Miss Janet Fisher, appears in these letters later Mr Wallis died at Merino in May 1893.



FENELON FALLS WITH THE MILL

Pencil drawing by Anne Langton

To morrow I hope to get the affair about the land settled, and to call upon the Governor to present him a petition upon the subject of a road through our township, and then I shall be ready to return home.

In your remarks upon the relative advantages of my township and that of Adelaide, I am surprised that such a determined foe to monopolies could imagine for a moment that the Canada Co.'s management could be an advantage to the latter. The fact is that Adelaide does not belong to the Co., but, if it did, from all accounts it would be in much worse hands than those of Government. From what I have heard, from those who have been in the Co.'s possessions, they are most shamefully neglecting a very fine country, and jobbing is there carried on to a much greater extent than in the Government districts. Indeed of late years there is nothing worthy of the name of a job; every [thing] seems to be conducted upon the fairest principles. We have certainly more land speculators amongst us, but they, especially when they deal in U. E. rights, are often an advantage. Jameson, for instance, in order to make his speculations answer, must bring at least fifty working families into our township next year, or at any rate the following one. As to Adelaide and the new western townships in general, I learn from gentlemen interested in them and now in York that the want of water and pine timber is even more felt than the distance from a market. The land I believe to be superior to ours, and the winter not so long, but I am perfectly content with what I have got. The locks at Bobcajewonunk are constructing, I believe, at the expense of the District, assisted by a loan from the Province to almost the whole amount, to be repaid out of the tolls. As to the remainder of the communication, the opening of the Trent is an affair which we can hardly expect yet. The surveyor is at present engaged in making his report, but the result has not yet been made public; I heard however to-day from a very good authority that the upper part is to be opened next year, so as to extend our inland navigation about thirty miles; the remainder will be a work of great expense, and it seems to be the opinion that it will be carried into effect by a company, assisted by Government. In the meantime two bills have been brought in to form companies for connecting Rice Lake with Cobourg by a railroad, and with Port Hope by a canal I spoke the other day with the surveyor and engineer of the latter line, who had completed their line within half a mile, and both agreed in saying there would be no great obstacle to the work. The bill for this canal I think almost certain to pass

From Sturgeon Lake to Cameron's Lake is a rise of about 30 feet, and the land between being limestone rock will make the locks expensive—at present they are not thought of From thence to Balsam Lake the rise may be about four or five feet, but the river is so shallow and the banks so low that the last three quarter of a mile must be a canal. Balsam Lake and Lake Simcoe are pretty nearly on a level, and, for canoes, only seven miles in one place and three in another are portages The Lake Simcoe people talk of opening this by a company, but, until the Trent or the Port Hope Canal [is finished] I do not think there will be any work, above Bobcajewonunk, and even these I fear our steamer will scarcely pass until late next summer.

At present you see everything is in embryo, but, before I have any crops to sell, I have no doubt the six or seven miles land carriage at Peterborough will be all that interrupts my water communication with Montreal

I am not surprised at your feeling uneasy about my U E 's, as the low price must have given you some fears as to the validity of the title, but be assured they are groundless, the practice of selling them has long been permitted by a fiction of the law, and, although contrary to the original intentions of the Government, the necessity of putting actual settlers on each lot has been found to accelerate the settlement of a township so much that no obstacle is now thrown in the way of it, at least in our part of the Province

I have now 400 acres of them in the back of my land, for 200 of which I shall be able to get out my deeds next summer, in consideration of my own settlement. I have also secured the lot intended for B——, meaning to sell it again to a desirable neighbour, merely covering my own outlay, which is much below what land now fetches in Fenelon.

As to the desponding which you seem to expect I shall feel in long winter evenings I can assure you you need feel no alarm. I never felt so little inclined to despond in my life Your fears lest we should grow boorish in our manners are, I think, needless—at our end of the lake at least; our dress of course, is not in the style of a town dandy, but we have agreed to keep up a degree of form which sometimes amuses me when I look round on the accompaniments of the scene You all seem to run upon the subject of danger, as if we were exposed to any here, the fact is, with ordinary precaution, there is nothing in the life of a backwoodsmen which is worthy of the name. Fatigue and inconvenience there is in abundance, but danger none, and, as far as I have seen of the two former, there is nothing which novelty, at present, does not make rather pleasant than otherwise, and to which custom hereafter will [not] reconcile us.

I must hurry through the rest of your queries in order to go and drive a bargain, before dinner, with the owner of the land I wish to purchase for McCall and Macredie.

Our iron stoves are truly detestable; mine I rarely use, except when there are more than one in my house, for there is only one warm corner beside the fire. My chimney is a most rude hilt of stones and mud and wood, of a very singular shape, and throws out no heat except immediately in front, but I console myself because it draws admirably.

You ask about the sturgeon in our lake, but the name is *a non lucendo*. Our Indians, the Missisaugas, were originally settled near Niagara, where there are plenty of the fish, and, upon coming up here, they gave the lake the name it now bears—*Namé*—I know not why.

You suggest sending me out an assortment of articles from England. I do not approve of the plan. The difficulties and expense of getting them up would be very great; any trifles we may want we can get from the large stores in York, cheaper than we could get them up ourselves from Montreal. Pork is our greatest expense, and this we shall get cheaper this year, as McAndrew and I have ordered thirty barrels between us, which Wallis, who is on his road to Ohio to speculate largely in the article, will let us have at prime cost. What we do not want ourselves, our neighbours will take from us. In the same manner we are proposing to do with oxen, which we must get in spring. One or other of us will go over to Rochester, with a man who knows the points of an ox, and bring over six yoke from thence for ourselves and others on the Back Lakes.

Your Almanack must be wrong in the date of our land sale, or more probably there was some confusion in my date, for, from the length of my letter, I frequently take advantage of a spare hour to begin a letter, and finish it on a subsequent day without notifying the change of date. At any rate I not only bought the land in question at 10/- but got my deed for it yesterday, being a long parchment document which I dare say cost the Government twice as much as they received for the land.

By the bye that reminds me of your long tirade against jobbing. Some few snug jobs, in a quiet way, no doubt are to be found here as elsewhere, but, as far as land is concerned, as Canning said to L. Brougham, you have thrown away a most excellent stock of indignation; the most sharp sighted leader of the Opposition could find no fault at present. One small remnant of a job is all that is to be perceived in our back townships, though the old ones are still suffering from the effects of the good old system; the surveyors are paid by a percentage of the land and their portions ought to be chosen by ballot, but it would seem that in this operation Fortune contrived to get one eye from under the bandage, for the frontages are generally the lots first drawn. Our township however was surveyed as far back as 1826. One other transaction annoyed me a good deal, and perhaps I may have alluded to it in some of my letters, but I believe that now we have no cause to complain:—Government officers ought, I think, to be incapacitated from speculating in land, but the land in question was bought by Mr. McDonell fairly at public auction, and if he got it cheap it was simply that no one liked to bid against one who is so generally liked for a favourite lot.

Since I mentioned the Parliament before I have paid our legislators another visit and have heard a long rigmarole from the two leaders of the Opposition; one of them commenced as follows: "Several Honorable gentlemen has rose in this 'Ouse"—a very fair sample of the whole oration; I feel myself fast growing a Tory. There is a singular incongruity in the *tout ensemble* of the House; the court dress and sword of the Sergeant at Arms and the cocked hat of the Speaker (instead of a wig) all seem as if intended to look imposing; but the appearance of the members themselves, writing their letters or reading their newspapers at their several desks, whilst a little boy is running about, bringing them plates of sandwiches, etc., reminded one much of a coffee house. During the whole of the five or six speeches I listened to, not a single member appeared to think of anything but his own business; and, when one speaker sat down and another rose, very few even condescended to look up from their papers, to see who it might be.

I am just going out again to endeavour to get my two friends settled and will keep the letter open to tell you of the result.

After lingering about the government offices all day, I have at last put the thing into a train which I hope will be successful; Macredie at any rate I think certain.

The Port Hope Canal Bill has passed both Houses.

To his Father

Fenelon, Feb 2, 1834

I forget whether I told you that I had traced the owner of the land I was in quest of to a person residing in Niagara McCall and Macredie were going there, and certainly they might have enquired after the land themselves, but they seemed so undecided that I was afraid to lose sight of them, and then on their return, if they had determined on the thing, they would have nobody to assist them in getting choppers, etc. In short, after some deliberation I decided to accompany them, and with Wallis we set off in a waggon and reached Hamilton the second day. That evening Wallis and I went to Dundas As you are so full of geology I suppose I must make some remarks upon the subject Of course you have heard of the theory that Lake Ontario was formerly much above its present level; indeed I cannot conceive how any one, who has seen the extensive plain sixty or seventy feet or more above the Lake which is bounded by a most remarkable ridge, clearly traced from some 20 miles east of York to Niagara and thence to Rochester, can doubt of it The Lake in those days must have had a very deep bay at Hamilton, for the ridge there runs back into the country a long way, forming an extensive valley of from two to three miles broad in which Dundas is situated. Down the plain between these ridges run three or four deep ravines winding through it and constantly crossing the roads At the bottom of these is again a smaller plain with a stream winding through it, a perfect counterpart of the larger plain and ravines. I should imagine this betokens two distinct descents of the Lake; perhaps there was one still earlier, for the land on the top of the great ridge is almost a dead level for many miles until bounded by the higher land behind and is scarcely above the level of Lake Erie If the two were ever joined what a magnificent Fall there must have been in those days somewhere on the St Lawrence. Niagara looks as grand as ever—perhaps grander from its gigantic icicles, but the surrounding scenery loses most of its charms.

The next day we returned having been six days on our tour. Wallis went on to Ohio. The land after all was not to be had, but McCall determined to buy the front and be contented with the remainder of his land behind at some distance. At York we found Jameson, and all returned together, I with Jameson in his sleigh and the other two driving up Wallis's Sleighing surely is not the correct name for the mode of travelling that day, there has been no snow on the ground for ten days and six inches of mud did not make up for the loss, however we proceeded in hopes of reaching Windsor* whence we proposed [blank in the original] back by the Scugog But after eighteen miles walking alongside of our sleighs it grew dark and we were obliged to put up at a tavern in Pickering From here we struck back into Uxbridge, having some tolerable sleighing after the first ten miles from the Lake The next day one of our sleigh runners, being worn out by the bare roads, gave way and detained us so long that we could only reach a miserable farmhouse in Brock The following day on the confines of Mariposa we broke down in such a way that no blacksmith could ramp us up again. Committing the pole and our luggage to the other sleigh we mounted the horses until after five or six miles we fell in with a sort of vehicle called a jumper which we purchased for the enormous sum of half a dollar With our pole which we strapped on and a basket of mine for a seat we considered ourselves fortunate and drove in grand style to Purdy's Mill that night You will not form any very high idea of a jumper from the price we gave, but I can assure you it is a most admirable conveyance and most properly called a jumper Why it should differ so much from other sleighs I do not know but a better practice for learning a hunting seat cannot be imagined It sticks at nothing, wherever the horses can scramble the jumper can leap after them. We certainly fell off several times at first but at last we gained such confidence that, approaching Purdy's Mills, we resolved to show off, and putting the horses to full speed, successfully cleared a sawlog or two and a heap of firwood and finally deposited ourselves in the mud just opposite Purdy's door, to the no small amusement of a crowd of bystanders Next day we continued our journey, but had not proceeded three miles when it became evident that we had trusted too much to the jumping powers of our carriage its best days were clearly over—one of the runners was on its last legs, no blacksmith however was required here, an axe and an auger were all the tools wanted and in about an hour we started again, though from our inexperience of the art of carriage building the runner was but weakly. We now no longer went out of our way to jump logs but with all our care we broke down once more, and as the other sleigh had gone on we were obliged once more to take to our horses leaving our luggage behind Two or three and twenty miles on bare backs with the additional pleasure of harness were enough to teach us for the future not to jump too high, and though I shall not cease to up-

hold the excellence of jumpers I will be content with exhibiting them on a level road and not attempt to clear sawlogs again.

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* The former name of Whitby

On arriving at Peterborough we found a Bachelors' Ball in preparation which went off with great éclat I certainly never expected on coming to Canada that I should be one of the Bachelors who gave a ball to between eighty and ninety, and meet with two of the best waltzers I ever figured with. A tremendous thunderstorm luckily coming on we kept it up with unabated vigour till daylight, as there are no covered carriages in Canada. After the ball, McAndrew and I with our new neighbours hired a sleigh to Purdy's and the same day reached his house soon after dark. The next morning early I set out in hopes of finding my people in bed, but upon more mature consideration dawdled by the way in order to find them at breakfast. I arrived about eight but it seems I had been discovered on the Lake, the bird I wanted to find had flown. My house had been opened in my absence upon the plea that my property was getting damaged in consequence of the wet getting in during the thaw Yesterday I made no remark but I made my own researches and persuaded the man whose arm I set to tell me what had been going on, and the result is this — My gun and one of my buffalo robes have been used and my skates are at this moment in my worthy servant's box, about one pound of tea and two of sugar have evaporated, my whiskey has been tapped, to what extent I know not, and what is the worst of all, and what I expected, having dreamt of it at Niagara, I have been keeping a great Scotchman for three weeks and he had not left my shanty five minutes when I arrived. The King's evidence is not to be brought in if possible and my own discoveries are not very important but I have great hopes of the skates bringing something to light. To morrow morning I shall hold a court of inquiry and dismiss them both immediately. The boy I may dismiss at once, but the man is engaged till the 1st of May. If I can bring all home to him of course I need not pay him his wages beyond to-day; but, if my man will not inform, I can only bring positively the opening my house and using my gun and buffalo robe home to him, and I question whether he may not compel me; at any rate he shall sue me for it, but I have great hopes in the skates. Whatever may be the result of my judicial labours tomorrow they must both go and I do not mean to have another servant till the new emigrants begin arriving when I shall take a man and his wife. My choppers are going down in a week or so and will not be back till the end of next month but I care little for that, I have lived long enough in the woods to be quite contented alone, my washing being the only thing I have an objection to do myself, and that I can get done by McAndrew's woman. I shall bake bread and boil a mess of potato soup twice a week, and the latter warmed up and cold pork will satisfy me, chopping firewood will be a pleasant variety. McAndrew will come over occasionally to see if I am alive and I shall invite McCall and Macredie to spend a day or two and initiate them into some of the mysteries of the backwoods. I rather enjoy the thoughts of the thing, but nevertheless I wish I had a dog. To morrow I shall give you more particulars, I must now turn my attention to airing my bed, for last night, after my work was done, I was so sleepy that I preferred a blanket on the

floor, being the 13th night since I had my clothes off save one intervening night.

March 7th, 1834 The day after I concluded my last I got rid of my establishment without having to call in any evidence. The skates, it seems, had been borrowed by the boy and taken from him by the man to hold over him *in terrorem* in case he told tales. A mutual recrimination, when they were asked for, let out many secrets, so I paid them their wages and dismissed them at once, no objections being made. I am sorry for the boy who I believe was only in fault as to going out skating one day, but I could not have kept him alone. It seems that the very day I went away my house was broken open. Ever since I have been alone, with the exception that the day before yesterday the three Macs came to dine with me. I cannot say I am tired of my solitude yet, though the washing up and the baking of bread are not occupations for which I feel any fondness; however I dare say I shall have enough of it before I get a servant again.

When I left off at the end of the former sheet I imagined that I had a great deal more to say, but I can only remember now one commission. Indian corn though the most profitable crop that there is when it succeeds has, particularly of late years, failed so generally throughout Canada on account of the late frosts that it is but seldom grown. Now I remember Mr Parr speaking of a variety which they grew in the north of Italy which from its only requiring about fifty days to come to maturity be called I think "Cinquantaria." If by means of him or of any one else you could procure me some seed, I think you might not only benefit me but the whole of Canada—a glory which I think should recompense you for your trouble.

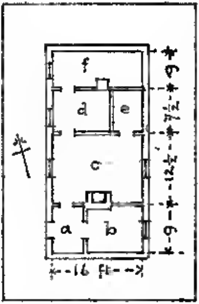
LIFE ON THE FARM

LETTERS OF 1834 AND 1835

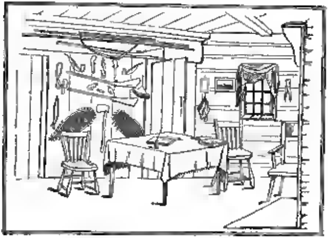
To his Father

Fenelon, April 4th, 1834

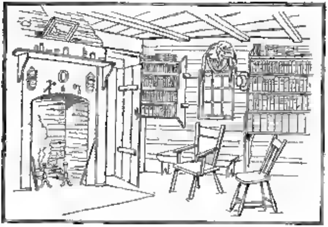
The great disadvantage of being at such a distance, after that of not seeing you, is that even by letter one cannot satisfactorily carry on a conversation. This truism has been elicited from me by the perusal of your letter of the 10th of December, which only reached me last week. The letter in answer to which you wrote was written I believe at the end of October, and it conveyed, I have no doubt, an accurate representation of my ideas and feelings at the time of writing; but your answer finds me with five months greater experience of the country and with views and feelings altered in many respects. We do not converse upon equal grounds; and I may add that during five months I have forgotten many things to which I alluded in my previous letter and hardly understand your allusions to them in your answer. I am sure that my letters must often appear to be full of inconsistencies, at least if they are at all faithful pictures of my mind at the several times of writing, for the earlier ones were written of course in very considerable ignorance of the subjects I treated of, and the new lights which break in upon me from time to time often make great changes in my modes of thinking. In reading over my journal of my first months in Canada I have been surprised at the errors into which I have fallen, my letters home, being written at greater intervals, will I dare say be more correct, but still I have no doubt you will have detected the inconsistencies to which I allude. . . . . . Upon the subject of my house, the plan will stand thus —



a Entrance,
b Workshop,
c Sitting room,
d Bedroom,
e Store room, from which are the entrances to the cellar and loft,
f Bedroom, a great part of which will be occupied with my chests, trunks, etc , and cupboards to hold linen and other articles The roof of the house is now simply of boards, not imbricated but nailed on lengthwise, and a copious admission of rain is the consequence. As soon as the business of the barn is over I mean to get the roof shingled The new roof and a fresh coat of mud in the interstices of the logs is all that I shall do, as I look upon it only as a temporary habitation for a couple of years, for, from the hurry I was in, it is but a poor affair and not worth any alterations, and besides is not in the situation which would be most desirable



Interior of Cottage looking North



Interior of Cottage looking South

—Drawings by Anne Langton

Your observations upon servants generally are pretty correct, but I do not, as far as I have yet seen in my own and other establishments, see much difficulty in managing them, but here as in everything else *in medio tutissimus* is the only rule. The working classes here naturally feel an independence which you do not find at home, and which, if you give way as some do, will soon lead them to consider themselves your equals; others again, by endeavouring to keep them under as they call it, only give rise to insolence and make themselves cordially hated. But I have never seen any yet who by a quiet reserve of manner cannot be kept respectful. At particular moments and with particular characters you may unbend occasionally and thereby make yourself liked without losing any authority. The art of managing servants is perhaps the most important one a new settler has to learn; I do not mean to say I am perfect in it, but when I say that, out of the seven people I have at different times had, I never found any difficulty except with one, you must not suppose me the worst manager, and he who did give me annoyance was in all important matters managed easily enough, but in trifles and when not at work too much inclined to be free and easy, which considering that we had lived in the same shanty for six weeks and that I for a great part of the time had acted the menial part of cook, scullion, etc., is not much to be wondered at.

I think all your questions about my land have been answered in my former letters, but I will tell you what new discoveries I have made. In the first place I must explain to you how the land is surveyed, to make you understand the difficulty of—what may appear to you a simple affair—ascertaining the boundaries of a lot.

Starting at the base of a township the surveyor runs the concession lines by compass, blazing the trees here and there along the line, and planting a post at the points where the imaginary lines which divide the lots cross the concessions. The concession lines run N 17½° W and the side lines I am told are not exactly perpendicular The shores of the lake are surveyed in a very slovenly manner, so that no dependence can be placed in the supposed contents of the broken fronts, and the position of the creeks, etc., appears to be laid down merely by guess Now walking through the bush at the best is hard work and in a swamp where the fallen trees lie upon one another in double and treble tiers and you can with difficulty see ten or twenty yards before you, it is not easy to proceed at a greater rate than a mile an hour Moreover the blazes are now, I believe, eleven years old, many of the blazed trees are fallen, and in others the bark has covered up the wound, in difficult places they are generally very sparingly and irregularly scattered, add to which that many of the posts have entirely disappeared, and you will have some idea of the difficulty of the operation

When I first came up I was fortunate enough to stumble upon the line between X and XI and the post between lots fifteen and sixteen, and with this guide I commenced building on the best situation I could find on what I knew must be my land. I had promises from two different surveyors during the winter to come up and run the lines, but neither made their appearance, and trusting to their coming and deterred by the difficulty of wading through three feet of snow whilst everything you touch precipitates a deluge of the same material down the back of your neck from the branches above, I never did anything towards surveying during the winter Thus when I last wrote I knew nothing further of my possessions than at my first arrival.* During this last fortnight, however, I have taken advantage of the fine weather which has cleared off most of the snow, whilst the ice on the swamps is still strong enough to bear one—at any rate oftener than it lets one through into the water—and I have gained much more definite ideas than I formerly possessed.

I first discovered the boundary line of the two townships—no easy matter when your only chance is to take a walk through a thick forest in the hopes of seeing a tree from which a piece of bark about the size of your two hands has been cut eleven years ago (or nine—I don't know the date to a certainty) and these trees scattered in a line at twenty or thirty yards apart However, I found it and pursued it a considerable distance both to the north and south but without finding a post, and with the other line which I had found in autumn I was not more successful. I now adopted a more tedious but surer plan, inviting Macredie to stay with me I started from the post I already knew, and measuring the line carefully I found the fourteenth post, the extreme south of my land, then striking off to the east by compass I fell in with the boundary line, and finding the fourteenth post after a minute search, rooted up and leaned against a tree at some distance from the line, we measured on again and successfully ascertained the position of the other posts as far as my land went The result of this examination was in many respects far from satisfactory and left still much to be ascertained. . . . . . The next step towards an accurate knowledge of my land was to resurvey the shore, in which there is certainly in one place an error and upon the correctness of which of course the contents of my broken front will depend. For this purpose I manufactured an instrument to serve me as a theodolite which of course was but a rude instrument and I consequently felt doubtful of the accuracy of my observations, but when upon calculating them I found that one distance which I measured by two perfectly independent sets of triangles, as a test, turned out by one 923.6 yards and by the other 925.4 I began to place as much reliance upon my survey as upon the Government maps. From these data I have drawn a map of the coast, but from not having ascertained with precision at what points the concession and side lines strike the Lake I cannot at present correct them. All this looks very easy on paper, but in practice, including a long day's post hunt for Mr. Wilson, and another expedition to run the line between X and XI S. to the Lake as a guide to McAndrew, it took up a whole fortnight and so completely deranged the regularity of my hours that one day we did not breakfast till twelve and dined at nine.

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* It seems that the remarks at the beginning of the letter about the difficulty of conversing at a distance, were drawn forth by a criticism in the letter he is answering, upon his having bought his land without having ascertained its boundaries

Since I have been left to myself my motions have been as like clockwork as those of a man who has no watch can be. I rise at an hour varying from five to seven. Having dressed I clean the house whilst the kettle is boiling and after breakfast I smoke a cigar and read as long as it lasts, I then wash up the accumulated plates, etc., of the twenty four hours and set to work at chopping firewood, joinering or whatever may be in hand at the time. At an hour before sunset, which I have come to calculate very accurately, I begin cooking, bringing in a pile of firewood, sweeping out the house, etc., in the intervals; and I rarely fail to have finished my dinner just as it gets dark. Another cigar's time is then devoted to meditation and digestion, and after reading, writing or sewing for half a candle, I go to bed. My baking, which is performed in a frying pan before the fire, requires constant attention, so I superintend that in the evening, having kneaded the dough during my cooking hour. In such a mode of life there is nothing to occupy the space of a letter, and here at McAndrew's where, as there is no one left to endanger the sanctity of my dwelling, I have been spending a week, we are quite as methodical. He and I, who sleep on the floor, rise at 5.30, Macredie and McCall, who as strangers have the beds, are loath to get up before seven, and then till dinner we pursue our several avocations, which have not been interrupted by any amusing variety, except one day having the house on fire and another when we sallied out on a fruitless chase after four wolves, from whom we succeeded, however, in rescuing the carcass of a deer which they had just run down and which we conveyed home in triumph, and have feasted on venison ever since. This is the second deer which our hounds have run down for us this winter.

My journal therefore must be prospective. To-morrow I go home to make preparations for the rest who are to dine with me on my birthday, and to superintend an interesting event which is about to take place with my venerable nanny-goat, who will now, I hope, supply me with milk. As soon as the lakes break up I go to York or, as it is now named in the Act for incorporating it, Toronto, from whence I am to convey to Whitby an extremely miscellaneous assortment of articles for our end of the lake, each bearing his share of my expenses, thence returning by Peterborough I am to meet the rest and help to bring up our new scow. The lake has not yet broken up, though the ice is very precarious in the middle of the day, but it cannot last more than a week. Nothing can exceed the beauty of the weather for this last month, once or twice for a day there has been heavy rain, but the rest has been the most delightful weather I ever experienced, with no mosquitoes to annoy one; it is almost worth coming to Canada to experience such a month. Since I have been here the door has been open from sunrise to sunset, though the lake lies in one unbroken sheet of ice within a few feet of us. The ducks are already crowding the rapids, the geese are daily going further north and in a few days we shall be in the midst of a northern spring, with it unfortunately will come heavy rains and mosquitoes, but we must be content—it is not to be expected that we should have such days as this of which you have no idea in England, without some of the drawbacks from which you are exempt. To-morrow I believe this letter is to set off to meet Wallis. I must now stop and go to chop by the orders of my methodical host—if I find anything more to say I will [use] the remaining space to-night.

April 7th. Nothing new has occurred. The ice being very ticklish, McAndrew and I went on a reconnoitering expedition, I first, to try the strength, and he behind me, to throw himself on his face to assist me if I went through. This did not occur, but, as it was so rotten as to allow us to sink over shoe tops as if in snow, we decided upon not going to my house and I kept my birthday here. To-day the ice has made very decided demonstrations of breaking up, having become detached at the edges, and the day after to-morrow I expect to go home in my canoe, which in contemplation of such an occurrence I dragged over the ice. . . . .

I wish my mother would send me one or two plain receipts for preserving We have plenty of wild raspberries, plums and cranberries, and I have found a few gooseberry bushes. Living as we do almost exclusively on salt pork some acids are much wanted. I have had a great longing for them all winter but my health has not suffered, some people break out in boils I have made no sugar this spring, partly from having too many things to attend to and partly because I have been informed that, unless you have several women and children to attend to the trees, it did not pay. I have now changed my opinion and next spring I will make a good quantity. It is very good but has a slight bitterness—not at all disagreeable—and the molasses is much better than that from the cane—not unlike rather insipid honey

To his Father

Cobourg, April 25, 1834

I arrived here from the city of Toronto at four o'clock this morning and as I cannot find conveyance to Peterborough till to-morrow I am going to employ my vacant time and vent my spleen in letter writing But before I indulge in a tirade against the whole monetary system of this Province I must bring up my journal to the present time

On the 8th of April then (I think I got you up to the 7th) the ice commenced loosening so much at the edges that we, like boys just escaping for the holidays, went upon it with long poles and amused ourselves for some hours in breaking it up and driving the broken pieces under the main body so as to form a narrow channel

along shore into which we could launch my canoe for the sole purpose of giving Macredie an upset. This may seem ridiculous enough to you, but if you had the lake closed with ice for five months you would have enjoyed once more the sight of a little open water.

The 9th. Having heard that the lake was open at the mouth of the Scugog I went through the bush to where McAndrew's boat had been left and explored the limit of the ice but found it unbroken in that direction. On my return at three in the afternoon I saw at about five miles off down the Lake a floating tree which indicated open water there, and, as a smart wind blew from that quarter, it rapidly advanced, and before we went to bed we had the pleasure of hearing the waves breaking upon the shores. The next morning there was not a piece of broken ice the size of your hand to be seen but it still remained firm from Sturgeon Point to the westward so as to stop my return by water. I embarked, however, in my canoe with three of McAndrew's men and landing on the opposite shore reached my house by land. At sunset that evening there was not a particle of ice from Cameron's Falls to Bobcajewonunk, and such is the rapidity with which spring comes, that the same day which witnessed the last of the ice produced the first flower, the first mosquito and the first black fly I had seen. I have been the more particular about the events of these few days because the ice is a subject of as much importance to us as the River Mersey is to Liverpool.

[The men from McAndrew's were borrowed to clear up round his house as a preparation of safety for the burn, which was part of the choppers' contract and might be carried out by them during his absence in Toronto. This and other operations, such as getting

down their oxen which had arrived at Purdy's, consumed the time until the 18th when, as agent for the four neighbours, he started for Toronto, which by way of canoe to Peterborough, steamboat to Rice Lake, stage to Cobourg, and steamboat again on Lake Ontario he reached on the 22nd.]

And now begin my griefs. To meet the purchases I was to make I was the bearer of two drafts from McCall and Macredie, the former on York accompanied by a letter of credit, the other ought to have been cashed for me in Peterborough, but this I soon saw was impossible. Cash at all times is a most rare article in Canada and now that the disordered state of the United States banks has thrown us all into confusion things have come to such a pass that people of known property refuse payment to their own bills with as much coolness as a dandy puts off his dunning tailor. And to make matters worse, Mr. Bethune, the great man of our district, has just been declared a bankrupt; his failure is very severely felt, many of the monied emigrants have placed their funds with him and he has been a sort of savings bank for the poorer class. For some time he has been refusing payment, but the storekeepers believing him sound have been taking orders on him in cash and they are consequently taken in too. How he may wind up I cannot form an idea. One class hold him up as everything that is honourable, noble and generous, and they say his debts do not amount to £20,000 and that he can show undoubted security for £60,000. The other class doubt this much and don't scruple in private to call him a rascal. Many believe that it was he himself who robbed the Bank of U. C. of the £3,000 which were missing last autumn, when he was the cashier of its branch here. I know but little

of him personally, but he is an agreeable and gentlemanly person, and, though his own interest was doubtless at the bottom of it, has done more for the Newcastle district than any other living man. Be all this however as it may I do not believe that Sir Richard Arkwright himself could have raised £20 in Peterborough and Cobourg.

Still trusting to McCall's draft and some cash of my own I went on to Toronto, and after being put off for an hour or two on the plea of the cashier being absent, I was at length bowed out of the bank with the assurance that the names were perfectly good, but, etc., etc. In short the bank will not discount a halfpenny, and I got no money, so after spending the morning in making purchases of such things as appeared more immediately necessary, as far as I could spare the cash, I the next day embarked for this place, and mean to hasten back to the woods there to vegetate as well as I may until better times. To add to my melancholy this morning I have heard that during my absence Mr. Ferguson, the most respectable storekeeper and the kindest-hearted and best man in Peterborough, died suddenly after a few hours' illness; his loss will be greatly felt, by none more than by us backwoodsmen to whom his house was always a home when they came down to Peterborough.

Unless some radical change is made in the money matters of this country it will not be a country to live in. Property there is in abundance but no representative of it, and the former increases in much more rapid proportion than the latter, so that we are getting worse every day. A metallic currency I am afraid cannot be established amongst us yet as the balance of trade is so decidedly against us with the States, but a much more extended paper currency must be issued or there

will soon be a stop to all business The bank issues are not half sufficient for the wants of the country, and they are under great restrictions in this respect from Government, but above all they are a monopoly When they are refusing discount to every one else, the directors and their friends find favour in their sight, they are a monopoly, not by statute but by the circumstances of the country There are few men in Canada with capital sufficient to establish a private banking house of any extent and these few have their capital so locked up in mills, steamboats, land-speculations, etc, that they cannot attempt it. And as for joint stock banks that was tried and failed last session It passed the lower house indeed but a majority of the Legislative Council are either bank directors or shareholders and they threw it out A private bank—or more—must be established with English capital and I think the country holds out the fairest prospects to them. Property, as I said before, there is in abundance—much more property and more generally diffused than in England in proportion. There is scarcely a man in Canada who has not tangible property of some kind and our Register offices prevent any fraud in this respect, as no deed or mortgage is valid that is not registered. During several years that Mr Bethune was cashier of the Cobourg branch, though the discounts were then much more freely given than of late years, delay indeed frequently occurred, from the want of a circulating medium, but during the whole of that time the actual loss upon discounted bills was only £200 or £300 When the risk is so small, six per cent offers, I think, a temptation Then, if a low rate of interest were allowed on deposits, all that specie which yearly comes out from England with the emigrants to be locked up in their chests would be deposited with any substantial bank and all the remittances to and drafts on England would pass through their hands. The exorbitant profits on exchange which the bank exacts have thrown all that business where practicable into the hands of the Montreal merchants. When exchange was at five per cent. at Montreal not more than one and one-half or two could be obtained at Cobourg and in one case I know that only par was obtained. The bank have found their monopoly pretty profitable, twenty-six per cent. having been divided last year. I do not wonder at the Legislative Council throwing out the Bill for establishing a joint stock bank at Cobourg.

In a former letter I remember saying I was growing a Tory—I feel myself fast approaching to Radicalism again, but not of that sort of which that little factious wretch Mackenzie is leader. I don't know whether you ever heard of him; he has been lately over in England with a budget full of grievances and we here think he has been making a great noise with you, when I first came out the first question everybody asked me was—"What do they think of Mackenzie in England?" and I was stared at when I said I had never heard of him. He is a little red-haired man about five feet nothing and extremely like a baboon but he is the O'Connell of Canada. They have expelled him from the House of Assembly and elected him Mayor of the City of Toronto. But to return to banking—it has been some time reported that some of the London nobs are going to send out a house and that the buildings are already purchased in Toronto—I was just going to say the ground was purchased, but then you might have imagined it proposed to send the house out ready built from London—a speculation so singular that it might have made you look with suspicion on the whole report This may do something for us—God knows we need it.

In one of your letters, if not your last, you express some apprehension about my canoe Now a canoe* is certainly a little light affair that you can carry for a mile or two upon your shoulders and which a single false step in embarking or disembarking will upset, but it will carry half a dozen men in safety over a stormy lake and when you get accustomed to the craft you feel as steady as in a seventy-four Indeed the other day, so much does habit make one unconsciously keep one's balance, that though I attempted it frequently I could not upset my canoe when Macredie was out with me in it, and it was not till I had got out that his awkwardness in attempting to do the same enabled me to give him the desired ducking Indeed there is only one case, except by gross carelessness, in which there is any danger in a canoe, viz., if you bring her broadside to the sea in rough weather, when she is very apt to swamp A boat is in most cases a preferable craft, you can carry a greater load you need not handle it like a new born baby, you go quicker and defy all winds. In a canoe unless the wind is dead aft it is always in your way, particularly if alone, and even with the greatest care she is constantly getting a leak. But then in fine weather she is so easily launched, and paddled with such ease and silence if you want to steal upon a duck, etc. You cannot take a boat upon your shoulders and carry it over any obstacle such as Cameron's Falls or the pitch at Bobcajewonunk, and in coming up even a practicable rapid in a boat you may indeed put out your whole strength, but you have to keep the middle of the stream with barely room often to ply your oars, whereas in a canoe you may go any where which will admit the narrow bark itself, and steal up the sides of the stream taking advantage of the eddy caused by every stone and stump, and by stepping out with one foot keep her floating in two inches of water Each has its own advantage and I have both to use as occasion may require

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* A bark canoe.

I shall be very glad to give you a paper for the Lit. and Phil. Soc if anything occurs worth noticing perhaps you can suggest some point upon which my limited experience will enable me to hold forth to them, and I will direct my attention to it. If you belonged to the Manchester set I could give you Aurora Borealis enough to surfeit even old Dr. Dalton......

My space is growing so limited that I must be laconic, but the honey must not be forgotten I might indeed collect a keg of the molasses of the maple sugar, and having flavoured it with wild herbs I might make honey such as my father loveth, but I am afraid you would detect the cheat, real honey I cannot promise The honey bee is not a native of N America and, though numerous swarms have established themselves in the woods and have become naturalized on the confines of civilization in the Western States, I hear of none in Canada I even shall find difficulty in procuring the hives which I mean to locate on Sturgeon Lake, if their produce turns out to be deserving of the carriage you may depend upon the first fruits.....

To his Father

Fenelon, May 24, 1834

[The previous letter was written from Cobourg on his way home from Toronto This gives an account of

the journey from Peterborough, the little adventures of which are so characteristic of such journeys that it is a pity to omit them.]

Early on the 29th, I set off, accompanied by Edward Caddy, a very nice lad who is living with a brother settled in Douro, and we had a prosperous voyage till we got to Pigeon Lake, where of course there was a high wind and of course against us. About the middle of the lake Caddy, who had never been in a canoe before, got the cramp from his kneeling position and I had hard work for half an hour to keep us from retrograding whilst he was recovering. In consequence of this and a subsequent rest when we got under shelter of the other shore, Mr. Frazer, who was in company with us in a boat, got an hour's start of us, but about a mile below Bobcajewonunk we came up with them, they had been beaten back ten different times from one point in the river by the current. We in the canoe got up easily, and, meeting one of the choppers at the tavern, I sent him down to their assistance, but Mrs Frazer had to be left in the bush until her husband returned to fetch her up by land Sturgeon Lake is hardly a place for ladies yet.

As there was not enough daylight left to get our canoe up the rapids, we were obliged to spend a long evening at the tavern, which was unusually full in consequence of a house raising in the neighbourhood, the dimensions of the building (the tavern) are twelve feet by twenty two, in which space twenty three human souls, including three married couples and two unmarried females found sleeping room Mr and Mrs Frazer, I must observe, walked on to Sawers'

[Some cold weather in May, a little later, is also worth recording, as a part of a visit to Peterborough]

The 8th, we [three guests with McAndrew, McCall and himself] left McAndrew's in two boats and, calling at Mr. Frazer's on the way, we reached Bobcajewonunk before nine, and sent back my boat with a family whom McAndrew had engaged to chop for me in Peterborough.

The steamer was just starting on her first trip of the season and we raced with her down Pigeon Lake, keeping ahead of her all the way to Billy McQue's where we stopped a while. As we were six in the boat and could only pull two oars you may imagine what her speed is. We got to Peterborough to dinner. From then to the thirteenth, we remained in Peterborough making purchases, which until then we could not get carried out to Chemong Lake. On the fourteenth, we were ready to start when lo! there were icicles three feet long hanging from the houses, snow four inches deep, and sleighs going about as if in winter. There never was such weather on record; lucky it is for those who have no crops growing. I don't know what the thermometer was, but I think it must have been below twenty. I am afraid I must give up praising our climate. The rapid change from twenty on the fourteenth, to eighty eight on the twenty third will frighten the people of your more temperate regions. The thermometer was at eighty-eight in the shade yesterday before twelve o'clock, what it might rise to afterwards I don't know. However, being rather lightly clothed we did not care to face the snowstorm and did not leave Peterborough till the fifteenth, the ground being hard frozen.

Upon arriving to breakfast on Chemong Lake we found our scow had not yet been brought there according to promise, and, as McCall was useless from a bad hand, McAndrew and I did not like to undertake bringing her down from five miles off by ourselves and then continuing our journey with almost a certainty of having to camp out on the road without blankets, so as the steamer was just starting we got all our things on board and got to Bobcajewonunk before five. Leaving most of our luggage there we got up the rapids with as much as our boat would hold, with the intention of getting forward to McAndrew's to sleep; but in passing Need's about five o'clock, the sight of a deer which the wolves had just driven into the lake and he had killed, together with his pressing invitation, arrested us.[*] We had had nothing to eat since breakfast and were wet and cold, the idea of arriving at McAndrew's at eleven at night and having to light a fire and cook our supper was not cheering. However as it was we had better have gone on, for Need's fire would not burn, and what with skinning and cutting up the deer it was one o'clock in the morning before we got supper, and to crown our misfortunes Need does not keep any spare blankets, so McAndrew and I had to sleep on the floor in our wet clothes, after many fruitless attempts to get the fire to burn.

We were off before anybody was stirring and got to McAndrew's for breakfast, and in the afternoon I went home in my boat with a most unruly cargo, consisting of a pig and six fowls together with some more manage-

able bags of flour, oats, etc In the middle of the Lake the pig got her legs loose and dire was the scuffle before I could get her down again and get her manacles adjusted. In her struggles she had kicked out some rags with which a leak had been temporarily stopped up till I can get a supply of oakum and pitch, and I had to stop every ten minutes to bale out, until by shifting my cargo to one side so as to bring one gunwale almost to the water, I contrived to keep the leak above water, not however without imminent danger of drowning my pig in the water which still filled the bottom of the boat The pig though a bad sailor is nevertheless a good pig, a very tractable animal except for a great fondness for coming into the house. As for want of oxen I have not yet been able to fence in my garden, I cannot fairly object against her the rooting up my onion bed. The hens might as well have remained at Peterborough, for the brush heaps afford so many convenient hiding places that I have not yet found an egg, indeed one of the poor creatures would have been much better there, for she this morning served as breakfast to a fox or marten I have finished the frame of a hen house but until I get up some of my boards* from McAndrew's I cannot give them effectual shelter

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[*] The killing of this deer together with "a sudden and extreme change of temperature" while snow was on the ground is mentioned by Need under the date of May 17. Need's book is spoilt by an excessive reserve about other people, and he makes no mention of his guests on this occasion or of the adventure of preparing the deer for food, but his narrative is evidently an account of the same day as that here noted as the 15th. Both diarists occasionally lost a day. Need crossed the lake on Monday to attend the Church Service a friend held on Sunday. John Langton, p. 164, discovers he has dated his letter wrong.

The 17th. I began digging up a garden, a most laborious operation, for there is such a tangled mass of roots to be cleared away that the axe and the pickaxe with the assistance of the hands almost supersede the use of the spade. What I have done behind the house is, however, thoroughly cleared and is reserved for those plants which require a well cultivated soil, the front of the house I have left for Macredie (who came up this day to stay a few days with me), and it will produce some things until I have time to get the whole thoroughly cleared

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* During his absence in Toronto the three Macs had brought down from Purdy's saw mills two rafts of boards each containing 10,000 ft which were to be divided among the four neighbours.

The 18th, Sunday, we spent much of the day on the lake as being the coolest place.

The 19th My choppers had not yet returned and as we had had a few days of dry weather I was afraid to lose the opportunity and resolved to burn their chopping without them. If the burn turned out a bad one, of course they would have come upon me for the damage, but the fear of being quite too late for potatoes overcame my doubts and, getting the assistance of my new choppers, we soon had it in a blaze, about half an hour afterwards my men arrived. As it turned out we should have done much better to have waited a few days, but, as the men acknowledged that they were hurrying up to burn that day, I am relieved of all responsibility It has been a very poor burn in many parts and in my own chopping it has not burnt at all, so that I don't think I shall get more than seven or eight acres ready for a crop out of the fifteen or more that are down, the rest will have to wait for the autumn, but I shall get in my potatoes and turnips and probably some oats for the straw Indeed upon new land the oats seldom bring much grain to perfection but the straw is most luxuriant and is almost indispensable for fodder in the winter

The next three days Macredie and I worked at the garden, and yesterday, having at last got hold of Jameson's scow, I went over to McAndrew's and brought up my oxen, which I have never before been able to get across the lake since we brought them down. To-day we drew off the logs which encumbered the ground of my garden and drew in logs to split up for rails, so that as soon as I get a man to help me I shall have a chance of getting it fenced in and into some decent order. The three Macs are gone down to-day in the scow to bring up our flour, etc., from the rapids. On Monday we go to Ops to bring down potatoes, and there I mean to hire a man; and on Wednesday we all go to Peterborough to buy McCall's and Macredie's land, to bring up our scow, and to get some pork, for we are beginning to be threatened with scarcity. Next week I shall have twelve mouths to feed and I have not above 150 pounds of pork left; McAndrew has been for some time borrowing a few pounds at a time. Jameson, who used to be our principal reliance in case of want, has twenty or thirty hands employed building his saw mill, and at the lower end of the lake there is an absolute famine. Need, after borrowing as much as anybody would lend, had eaten his last piece of pork to dinner the day he killed the deer. I am loath to leave home just now, especially as my oxen are but in poor condition and I am afraid of the men overworking them at the logging, but as I have escaped going down to Bobcajewonunk to-day I am afraid I must bear my share of bringing up the new scow.

You ask as to my plans of proceeding. I think that my former letters will have given you hints at different times from which you can gather my intentions pretty accurately, but I will now tell you more connectedly what my mode of operations will be.

I have now chopped (at a guess for it is not yet measured) about eleven acres by my first contract, about five of my own, and Abraham Fitchett the new chopper I mentioned, is to have fifteen more ready for fall crop. Then there will be about fifteen acres more along the lake shore which I shall get done during this summer and winter, partly by contract, partly by my own man, to open my present clearing to the lake, about ten or twelve acres of this will be light chopping, principally young timber on an old windfall or burn and will have to lie a summer before burning. This will make an opening from forty to fifty acres and most of this will be down in wheat and rye this fall and will be sown with grass in the spring. After this I propose to contract for ten acres every year and my own man may get perhaps about three more down, part of this will of course be got ready by the spring and the whole down in wheat in the fall. Fitchett, who has a large family wants to buy some land of me and has proposed to clear sixty acres for 300, which at fourteen dollars an acre is equal to 14/- for the land.* The offer is not a bad one and if, upon further acquaintance, I am satisfied with the man's character I think we may make a bargain, but I will not have more than ten or at the most fifteen acres chopped annually until hands are more easily to be got. I would sell him for instance 200 acres for ten acres cleared annually for five years, which reckoning interest on the instalments would be a trifle less than he offers. But this is a parenthesis. The first crop of wheat ought nearly to pay the √ expense of clearing the land, and, if you [get] a crop off in the summer before wheat is sowed, it should quite cover the expense. You then have the land in grass for four years before you attempt to plough, for if you try a second crop unless it be potatoes or corn (Indian), which being planted in hills you can hoe between, it is choked up with weeds from the impossibility of ploughing new land, and moreover all the stumps will send up suckers and you will have to cut and burn them again. When in grass the cattle will keep the suckers down of every tree except basswood. At the end of four years, or, on a summer's chopping or fallow, in three, you may get in the plough and each year some of the stumps come out. The first ploughing after so short a time is a laborious and expensive business, but the stumps will rot out the faster. After the plough has been got in you may follow of course any plan of cropping which may appear desirable but grass is the only thing to succeed your first crop on the greatest part of your land.

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* In the old currency a shilling was the equivalent of 20 cents

Now it appears, upon the plan I have sketched, that in the last year before I should get the plough into the land I am to have in wheat this fall, I should have eighty or ninety acres in grass and only fifteen in any other kind of crop, or, allowing five acres of the last year's chopping to be in spring corn, twenty acres, and this seems disproportionate; but it appears to be the opinion of every one I have spoken to that the rearing and feeding of cattle is the most profitable mode of farming in this country, and that, even after the plough can be got in, a grazing farm would be preferable to an arable one, and if the fully stocking so large a portion of grass land should appear to require too large an outlay of capital, I will observe that there will be many new settlers who, having no grass of their own, will be glad to put out their cattle, and that, besides a large quantity of hay being required for one's own cattle during our long winter, hay is an article which bears a higher proportionate price than any other produce, except in new townships potatoes, which were last year selling in Ops at as high a price per bushel as much of their wheat fetches this year.

You are very hard upon us and our slovenly ways of building, etc., but it seems to me you do not make sufficient allowances for the difference between a new and an old country, or for the hurry in which things are obliged to be done in a first settlement. Labour is dear, and the hands you employ, from being obliged to do a little of everything, are not very perfect at anything, so that you cannot afford the expense of, and cannot get the men to perform, first rate work at any rate. The cornering and hewing of a well built log house is [? not] perhaps as nice work as your Russian mode of fitting the logs,[*] but the one your men have been accustomed to and the other they have never seen. If you set them to any strange kind of work you must make up your mind to pay doubly and have worse work into the bargain; besides a man who has been sleeping in the open air with all his luggage under no better shelter than a cedar tree is glad to get under any sort of roof which will keep out the rain, and having spent a fortnight in a doorless, chimneyless, unchinked shanty he is equally in a hurry to get into something more worthy of the name of a house. Then as to the time which the building of my house took, a person who is living in England or Russia, who has his regular carpenters and masons, together with horses and carts to bring his materials, all at hand, is very apt to overlook the difference of our situation—the ground has to be cleared, the logs have to be cut here and there, to be carried on men's shoulders and raised to their places by mere human force, trees have to be split and hollowed out into troughs to form the roof, boards have to be fetched from a saw mill sixteen miles off and then carried a quarter of a mile on your shoulders, the cellar has to be dug; the stones for the chimney must be collected, and carried by hand sometimes a considerable distance, and, if you are unfortunately late in the season, the clay which is to cement and plaster your walls must be mixed with boiling water and worked before a fire, and you must keep a fire in the chimney whilst building to keep your cement from freezing. Then—your man may be lamed with a cut, etc., etc., which would be tedious to detail, but which taken collectively form no small impediment to one's progress, more especially the wounds which in frost will hardly ever heal, so that the scratches which in an ordinary way one would never think of, by accumulating sometimes make one's hands almost useless, we were once obliged to give up bread, none of us having a hand fit to knead with.

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[*] The frequent allusions to Russia are due to his father's impressionable youth having been spent there. No doubt the building of log houses in Russia, and the heating of them, operations centuries old, impressed him by their perfection, a perfection from which the backwoods methods were far removed.

Upon this subject of bread you are severe upon us too and have insulted us by offering a present of Robinson Crusoe. His oven no doubt was a very good one, but we in Canada have one quite as good . . . . .

But Rome was not built in a day, at first we had so much on our hands that we had no time to think of raising bread, besides that the frost operates much against the making of leaven; at last, however, we got some barm with the assistance of hops, etc., and, though in a hurry I still occasionally resort to the dough cakes, I am now setting as good bread as any in Liverpool. Our oven, or—as it is called—a bakepan, is a round pan with a flat bottom and flat lid, under which a few cinders are put and some more on the top, and it bakes as well as Robinson Crusoe could desire. The dough cakes are not as you seem to think a sort of fried dough, though that was what we had recourse to when we could not knead, but round thinnish cakes of good dough put into the bottom of a frying pan which is reared up before the fire with some hot coals behind it, and thus it is half toasted, half baked—very palatable I can assure you, particularly if mixed with a little pork fat.

Then you recommend to rub the pease through a sieve—but where is the sieve? And my mother suggests the potatoes being boiled separately—but I have only one pot. When I give a feast I am hard put to it for want of culinary utensils, but, with a little contrivance, I have managed on two occasions to produce six dishes. Thus, the pot may first half boil potatoes to be afterwards sliced and fried after the pork; it may then half boil a piece of beef which may be finished in a rude sort of Dutch oven, whilst the pot once more does duty with a stew of porcupine and rice; in the meantime the bakepan having finished a loaf may bake a venison pie and a cranberry tart; and without much difficulty fried fish and a deviled duck or partridge may be added, all which with the addition of cheese will make a very handsome dinner for the backwoods.

By the bye of cooking and eating which *unaccountably* fill a large space of my letters, for I am sure in practice they are very little attended to, excepting on the occasion of the before mentioned feasts when any strangers come up, and occasionally one amongst ourselves on birthdays, etc., or when we have got something particular, just to keep us in practice. Sometimes for form's [sake] I lay the cloth and take my meals regularly, but generally when Macredie is not

with me I take no regular meals, perhaps there may be some cold pork, or I fry some cold potatoes, but I never have any cooking till after dark, the loaf of bread and a tea pot full of cold tea being always ready if I feel hungry during the day, which however, seldom happens. The baking, which I always disliked and which is a great interruption, I have lately transferred to Mrs. Grey, and the other bore, the washing up, unless Macredie comes, who shines in that line, I do all in a lump when I have used up my stock of plates, etc. In truth I am almost tired of living alone. But as I was saying by the bye of eating, we are beginning to improve in that respect. venison is not yet in season and maskinonge has just gone out for a month or two, but the pigeons are beginning to be numerous, partridges may be had at half an hour's warning though it is rather a shame to shoot them at present and a stray duck falls in one's way every now and then. The other day I shot a porcupine which upon the second trial I pronounce very good eating, and what is better, there is a great deal of solid substantial food on them, there is a peculiar smell and taste about the meat which I judged it prudent to mitigate by parboiling, but after that he made a most excellent stew. The beast to my surprise was in the top of a tree, and, if you wish more acquaintance with him his name is Hystrix dorsata. Then I have a kid ready for the butcher in another week, and about a fortnight after expect a goodly family of little pigs, which, with what I may shoot and with the eggs, chickens and ducks I may have, and my goat's milk after the death of her kid, will supply me with an occasional variety from salt pork. But our great dependence at present is the black bass. Remembering your enquiries about the creature I went out yesterday (to day is Sunday the 25th) and caught one. First having examined it, I pronounce it to belong to the family of Percoides, of the order Acanthopterygii, to have the ventral fins below the pectoral, to have only one dorsal fin, six bronchial rays and numerous crowded teeth. I believe it to be of the genus Pomotis of Cuvier; the species my authority does not enable me to determine; and secondly, having eaten it, I decide that it is an excellent fish. Water zootje we have not yet tried, but from the gelatinous nature of the gravy which fills a dish upon which cold fish has been left I think it may succeed. Whatever the scientific name of the fish may be, its American name is Black Bass, the same if I remember right which is immortalized by Cooper in the Pioneers. When maskinonge comes into season I will tell you all I can discover with regard to them. . . . .

I do not propose giving Billy McQue a spade, I do not see what use he has for it except to take out the ashes.

I want nothing particular from England.

May the 28th. As I have still some room left I will fill it with my journal up to the present time, and it is fortunate for me that I have not to occupy the space by contradicting my last sentence saying that instead of nothing I want everything. . . .

[This is said because, while visiting McAndrew, he received news that they were burning the brush at his place.] As this [he says] had already been finished ten days ago I was rather uneasy, but thinking my house pretty safe I went on loading the scow till the arrival of Fitchett with intelligence that the fire, which has been smouldering in old logs ever since my burn,

had broken out with the high wind and that the cedar swamp in front of my house was all in a blaze Having removed everything from Grey and Reilly's shanty, which was in the greatest danger, he had left two of his boys with orders to watch the progress of the fire and break open my house if the danger increased I jumped into the first boat that came in my way and pulled off directly; Grey followed with Fitchett and his son, and soon after Macredie and McInnes put off after me. Having fallen [on] a most miserable abortion of a boat and the wind being very high I landed as soon as possible and struck off through the bush, being much assisted by my new road which I fell in with Grey and I, having the one a wife and child and the other his property at stake, far outstripped the rest and had got most of the contents of my house out before assistance arrived. When we reached the bottom of the hill, from the top of which I knew we should ascertain our fate, we moderated our pace; I must say I felt very philosophical, receiving great consolation from the recollection that I had lent Jameson the day before eleven plates; but upon reaching the top of the hill my house gladdened my sight—entire—though Grey's was a heap of ashes. He is now however domesticated in my vacant shanty and does not appear to have lost anything but one knife and fork

When I was living here alone I had always planned that if a fire took place I would throw everything down into the cellar; but my cellar is now unfortunately, really a cellar and not a well, so we removed all the heavy articles outside, and, having carried up a lot of empty barrels to the middle of the clearing, we carried up sacks full of the loose articles and filled them there

We have now I think, by keeping the ground well wet, set certain bounds to the fire which it will not transgress while the wind remains in the present quarter at least; but fallen trees having since choked up my road to the lake we shall be ill off for water in case it increased. However towards sunset the wind generally dies away and we have a fair promise of a rainy night, so that I have carried everything back into the house, but kept them packed up in readiness to remove at a moment's notice, and having taken a couple of hours sleep I am now ready to sit up all night to watch. If the wind changes before rain comes the house must go but I shall have time to save the contents

Of course I shall not go down to morrow to Peterborough but must get my business done by some of the rest. Macredie I am momentarily expecting to come back for my instructions and this letter

This is but a tantalizing conclusion to a letter, and I am almost sorry now that I did not reserve to-day's occurrences for a beginning to my next; but it is one of the evils of the backwoods, which, when one has been living for a week surrounded by fires, one thinks much less of [fire] than you will However you may console yourself with this—that should the house be burnt I am not at all alarmed for the contents; and though I should not like to lose the £20 it may have cost, I can now build a much better for the money. I will write again in a fortnight to tell you the result and perhaps this letter may not get off till that can be known—for when I left McAndrew's there were fires burning so near it that I should not leave it to-morrow if it were mine, and I should think he will not. But what with the party there now and his men he has so many hands that there cannot be much danger.

P S Peterborough, May 31st. All danger being over and three more men having arrived to help at my logging I came down here yesterday

To his Father

Fenelon, 13th June, 1834

You seem to wonder that we do not buy our goods at Peterborough. Mr Ferguson was an excellent worthy man, but a very bad storekeeper; he went upon the old Canadian system of enormous profit and almost unlimited credit; this might be almost necessary formerly, but now when cash is more plentiful those who have it are not content to give cash for credit prices The merchants at York and in the front soon found out this and reduced their prices for cash accordingly, but the new system had not travelled into the backwoods when we made our purchases last year, they talked indeed of cash, but it was the old Canadian cash, viz, six months and—a bittock There is a great deal of difference between cash and down upon the counter Mr Wark had just arrived last year and was perfectly well inclined to take the credit prices, though he was understood to be equally for payment of them in cash But Mr Wark though very shrewd is a man of business and saw through the evils of the system; when we had found out the way by the Scugog river he came forward with a proposal to deal with us at really cash prices, but always under an injunction of secrecy, being unwilling to lose the benefit of the—almost—monopoly, which since Mr Ferguson's death he holds of those to whom the Scugog is not so convenient. We agreed to his proposals, and I hope may now get our supplies from thence at moderate rates, which will be

the more convenient to us, as he is establishing a store at Bobcaygeon, so that he can deliver us our goods there. (You see I have altered my spelling once more in obedience to common usage, though the other accords better with the Indian pronunciation; in common parlance we call the two channels for shortness Great and Little Bob.) I do not place implicit reliance on Mr. Wark alone, but we are going to have another large establishment at the head of which will be Mr. Ferguson's brother. They have purchased the Peterborough mills for £8,000 from Mr. Hall, who four years ago paid £3,000 for them—about three times as much as he was worth in the world, and they are going to open in connection with them an extensive store. Between the two I consider Peterborough our market now, though it is a comfort to have a nearer road to Lake Ontario, and I think we shall not often have to resort to the front or to England to get things cheaper (excepting for very heavy articles), though we may get them better. I hope that the state of the money market last winter will have opened the eyes of Canada in general to the impolicy of the old credit system.

You will say that in my disquisition on the trade of Peterborough I talk more as if I was a merchant than a poor farmer. But I am a sort of merchant in my way, and the stores I have to get up amount to a sum which makes the difference between cash and credit prices of great importance. I have now thirteen persons to supply with all the necessaries of life, viz., two sets of men working on contract and two men on wages, and though I make a profit which remunerates me for my trouble and risk in bringing the goods up, I contrive generally to sell them cheaper than they could get them from a store in Peterborough.

The events of a stay at Peterborough always puzzle me in writing my journal. On Sundays we go to church and make calls and on week days drinking tea at Col. Brown's or the Fergusons is the only variety from wandering about from the blacksmith to the cooper, the ✓ shoemaker, the tin man, the mill and the different stores, fruitlessly endeavouring to hurry them on with what you want .....

Your suggestion upon the subject of potatoes shall be tried; it reminds me of a receipt I got from Mr McDonell—maskinonge is in full season in the winter and is then speared through the ice. When you get more than you want, of course in winter they will keep till there is a thaw, but then they go directly. Now I am instructed to treat them thus: When you have a maskinonge to spare, boil a couple of dozen potatoes, peel them and mash them in the bottom of a barrel, strewing on plenty of salt and pepper; then boil your fish—practice only can tell you how much—but at a certain stage if you take him up by the tail and give him a gentle shake over the barrel all the flesh will fall off and leave the skeleton in your hand, lay this evenly and salt and pepper it again; repeat this operation till your barrel is full, then head it up and when all is hard frozen it will keep in a cool place good till the beginning of June. When any is wanted for use take out a sufficient quantity and fry it in little round cakes.

One thing I must complete this summer, which with you is a luxury but with us almost a necessity—an ice- ✓ house. Even my kid, small as it was, was almost too much for me though I had a dinner party and two chance guests, hungry customers who had been walking through the bush all day. Without an ice-house we must absolutely live on fish, birds, or salt meat, for we

never could get through a good joint. Then with an ice-house one might keep ducks, pigeons, partridge, etc., which are plentiful in the fall, for winter's use when they are difficult to get, and one might have a better chance of keeping beer; even in winter there are occasional thaws for a day or two when one's stores would stand a bad chance.

Upon the subject of Billy McQue and his spade I must beg leave to have a discriminating power; he is a most hospitable old creature, I have known him, when he had not a mouthful in the house, buy some venison of an Indian, to satisfy a hungry guest, which he would never have asked for himself, but he has no use for a spade, and a bag of flour, which I gave him last winter, and mean to repeat this, is more than compensation for any damage his spade may have sustained.

By the bye I have had a bright idea. Shall I call my house Pecoosheen, which being interpreted means Black Fly—a name by which, why and wherefore I cannot tell, I commonly go amongst the Indians. Pecoosheen of that ilk would sound well I think.

June 18th. I do not like writing home when I am in a bad humour for fear my letters may partake of the infection, but though I am in anything but a philosophic mind to-day I am driven by sheer ennui to continue my letter. My house is so closely packed with flour, oats, pork, potatoes, etc., that any indoors work is next to impossible, and as there is only one dry spot where I can bestow myself locomotion becomes very inconvenient. A general washing day is proverbially detrimental to placidity of mind and how much more so must be the state in which I now am which has all the disadvantages of wet, extending even to my bed, without at all promoting the cleanliness of anything

At the setting in of the thaw I thought myself badly off when I had to move my chair now and then to escape the driblets of water which from time to time found their way through the roof, but that was a luxury to my present state when the boards which cover my house have shrunk up with our June sun and now admit a copious flow of water fifty places at once. Yesterday I bore the rain with great philosophy, consoling myself with the good it was doing my potatoes, but to-day, when I have finished the old newspapers and reviews, settled my accounts and done all the odd jobs I can think of I must own I am tired of being wet, day and night, and look forward with pleasure to such weather as we had last Sunday week when the thermometer stood at 92° in the shade. But my troubles in this respect will I hope be soon over, for I am going to have two men this week to shingle my house and add the other wing, and then, but not till then, I shall be able to get the interior properly and comfortably finished.

On Saturday the 21st, as I was going up to the Falls to fetch Capt. Dobbs down to dine with me and play chess, I met Jameson's scow coming down with two of his men and two strangers returning from the Falls, and, as I had promised Jameson to get him a load up from the Rapids, I returned with them. We dined at my house and drank tea at McAndrew's, waiting for the wind to fall. About 8 p.m. we continued our journey and camped out about eleven at the head of the Rapids, as I had been rowing near twenty miles that morning before I met the scow and had pulled all the way down I slept most soundly, but my companions, the gentlemen just arrived, complained of rain and other inconveniences of which I knew nothing.

22nd. We went down in my boat and brought up in several trips the greater part of our load, but she is so out of repair at present, with carrying greater loads than she is calculated for, that she very nearly sunk with us twice and detained us a long time in patching her up. At night I preferred the bush to the dirt and noise of the tavern and camped out again with three Mohawk Indians on their return to the lower province with fifty beaver and other skins—£150 worth. I have often before spoken of the mosquitoes and my friends* the black flies, but there is another insect to which I am sure I have not done sufficient honour,—the midge, sandfly or gnat,—a diminutive little creature, scarce more than a black point. Its prick is like that of a needle and I had always despised it as beyond the first prick I never found any inconvenience from them, but when they come in tens of thousands it ceases to be a joke, and though I never yet have satisfactorily traced one of their bites to a spot, yet there are some five hundred to a thousand spots upon my hands, face, breast and other exposed parts to which I can ascribe no other origin. (I form this rough estimate from seventy eight which I counted on one hand, and I am sure my breast has double that number; the people at the Rapids, which they principally affect, look as if in the measles.) These with a due admixture of mosquitoes and black flies, together with ants, upon a nest of which I happened to spend the night, rendered me abundantly uncomfortable, but having been up to my middle in water working hard all day I slept well notwithstanding. 23rd. As we had been detained so long I resolved to wait for the steamer in the evening in hopes of some new arrivals, and as we had time to spare I set the men to take up the rest of the load and took a holyday myself during which I made great progress in an acquaintance with my new friends the Mohawks. From them I learnt the art of making an extempore canoe of elm bark, in one of which, measuring 6½ by 2½ feet and about 2 inches out of the water, I amused myself by paddling about, and though loath at first to leave the smooth and shallow water I finally trusted myself with confidence in the roughest part of the Rapids. The Mohawk hunting country is not like ours intersected by great lakes and rivers, and they consequently encumber themselves rarely with canoes, but, if they come upon a stream, in a few hours they can make a canoe of this sort capable of holding twenty men. As we advanced in intimacy during the day, though our only medium of communication was imperfect French and a still more imperfect Missisauga interpreter, the old chief Uraguadire intimated his intention of making me a member of the Five Nations. He first commenced by an oration to his two companions, and then while he held my hand they all joined in a wild song and finally hailed me by the name of So-ja-ho' wa nen, the final n being a scarcely audible nasal. My new name being interpreted means 'Un bien bon fan dans les bois'—truly a very good antidote for the Pecoosheene. They assure me that if ever I go to Cochnawaga or the Lake of the Two Mountains and mention my name I shall be recognized as a brother Indian.

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* Alluding to his Indian name

The Mohawks are certainly a much finer specimen of the Indians than our Missisaugas, if I may judge from this sample. They were all three fine muscular men and the youngest, a nephew of the old chief, remarkably handsome ......*

Mr Smith, the surveyor of our new township was down hunting for the boundary line of Verulam and Harvey, a continuation of which is to be his boundary, and (I mention it as showing how land was surveyed ten years ago) the 19th concession of Harvey is nowhere to be found What are the poor people to do who have bought land in the 19th concession? I question much if Government will refund the money, or if they can get redress from the surveyor and his sureties.

I may as well mention another of our grievances Last year Government contrary to the best advice raised the price of land at once from 5/ to 10/, and now they find that they were in error and are talking of reducing it again. What are we to do who bought at 10/? We certainly shall not get any of our money back and I doubt even if we get land in exchange. But with all this land keeps up its price, a lot was sold at 25/ the other day near me and not nearly as good land as mine But it is only monied men who buy here, all the labourers are going to the West Whatever they may do I am not afraid of losing my land, though it may be annoying to see others buying at half price, my vicinity to Cameron's Falls will always insure me a good price

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* Need, under date of June 18 of this year, says At the Rapids below the clearing I fell in with three Indians of the Mohawk tribe, returning from the chase with a quantity of furs One of them was Pierre a celebrated model of Indian symmetry I do not think I ever witnessed so faultless a form and figure, whether for beauty or strength"

These Mohawks spoken of in a later letter as 'great rascals by the way" were intruders upon the hunting grounds of the local Indians who were afraid of them in spite of or perhaps because of the massacre spoken of on p 23. Need says the local Indians annoyed him by camping on his land too close to his house. He did not like to drive them away but when they appeared a second time he says "I contrived to drop a hint or two of an expected visit from some Mohawk Indians The intruders said nothing, and appeared to receive the intelligence with perfect indifference but on rising next morning I had the satisfaction of finding the camp broken up and the coast cleared"

To day (26th), Capt. Dobbs and McAndrew came down to tea and the former beat me three games at chess. He is an old player and understands the rules, but I do not despair of beating him yet when I get a little more into practice.

The gentlemen being weather bound stayed all night, but as they chose to go to bed at the unchristianlike hour of nine o'clock I took the opportunity of writing my journal and finishing this letter, from nine to five being rather more than I like of a blanket on the floor. And now that I have finished my journal thus far, allow me to say that it is the last that I shall write with such regularity I originally commenced upon this system thinking that first impressions are best conveyed in that form, and that from a journal of my proceedings you would be better able to judge of our way of life than if I had attempted a more formal description of the state of society, etc. But now novelty is wearing off and there is nothing in nine days out of ten worthy of being recorded Whenever any variety occurs I will faithfully relate the adventure, but where I am silent you must imagine to yourself my usual humdrum life.

TO HIS FATHER

Fenelon, Oct. 28, 1834

It is so long since I wrote last, and that too after a considerable interval, that I fear you will think I am going to relax in my diligence as a correspondent, but when the hurry is once fairly over I have no doubt I shall become more regular again

Ever since July I have been in a continued bustle, with twenty things calling imperatively to be done and no time to be spared. When called down to Peterborough it has been in a hurry before I had time to write a letter, and when down there it is impossible to write.

To-morrow we are going down to Peterborough for the last time before winter, for the treble purpose—of attending a public meeting to petition for the opening of the Trent,—to get up our stores before our approaching state of torpidity comes on,—and to be present at a housewarming to be given by Major Hamilton,—and this opportunity of writing to you, as it may be the last for some time, I must not let slip.

I do not remember by the bye whether I ever mentioned the Major to you in any of my letters. He is a very gentlemanly old man who bought a mill at Peterborough last autumn and has lately been joined by an agreeable family of all sexes and ages, of whom the eldest son, about twenty, is going to be our neighbour next summer on Cameron's Lake, on his father's grant.[*]

Of my proceedings since I last wrote I have not much to say, when I went down to Peterborough and returned to my house with Mr. James, we were the bearers of the news that the Governor[†] was at last coming up to our Lakes. Having notified this to the different gentlemen on the road we went up to McAndrew's and he and I rowed down to Need's to bring the great man up, leaving McCall and Macredie to cook dinner. But no governor had arrived and we returned to console ourselves by eating his dinner. Next day James and I went on to Blythe* and I sent my men down for the seed wheat I had brought up. But the following day, when I was without my boat, we had the satisfaction of seeing His Excellency proceed up with a long train of boats, canoes, etc. After a while McAndrew sent us a log canoe and we followed up to the Falls.

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[*] Major Hamilton was of the 78th and 79th Highlanders. He served with Sir Ralph Abercrombie in Egypt and in other campaigns. On retirement from service he received from the Imperial Government a grant of 2,000 acres of land in Canada. He came to Peterborough in 1832 and purchased the grist mill and saw mill of Adam Scott on Scott's Plains by the Otanabee. To these he added a brewery and distillery and operated them with Mr. Fortye, a son-in-law. His family consisted of three sons and seven daughters.

[†] Sir John Colborne.

The Governor was quite delighted with the place and promised to send us up plenty of settlers next year. This is not all humbug, Sir John being a plain straightforward sort of person, and to shew his zeal he next day walked about a dozen miles through the bush to see the Talbot river, which runs into Lake Simcoe, and immediately ordered a survey of the country between it and Balsam Canal. From Sir John's character and his known exertions when he has taken a fancy to a particular township I anticipate the happiest results.

Yours of the 27th August contains much to answer—at least many queries though short ones. Pork may certainly be grown as good in Canada as in the States, and the farmers' pork is generally better, but not being yet so well a settled country we use more pork than we grow and Ohio pork can be procured cheaper, they have extensive backwoods there where the pigs run almost wild,—most of the heads in our pork contain a rifle ball. This winter I shall not use much pickled pork, I am going to kill my interesting animal and two of her progeny when the frost sets in.

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* The name he had given his house, "the true pronunciation of the other name—Pingweshins—being too like Pincushions."

My ice house is nearly finished, half below the surface, with a good drain, and half above, the walls being double, of logs with about a foot of earth between, the roof of cedar slabs thatched with hemlock boughs and covered with a rounded top of earth from one to three feet. This with a roothouse of similar construction, a hen house, two pigstyes, a shed for cattle, one for fire wood, and two shanties, form a little village round my mansion with its two wings.

If you wish my letters still to give you a sort of Journal I can do it, as I still keep a journal for my own edification and when anything out of the way happens I certainly will give it in that form, but I think, in general, a hebdomadal will answer your purpose as well as a journal.

Peterborough, Oct. [Nov.] 8th. . . . We have had the Trent meeting of which I spoke and have got our petition well signed. It is to the effect that if our provincial funds cannot suffice, which is improbable, we wish *our* Parliament to apply to the Home government to open it; the increased value of Crown land and sale of mill sites will go a long way in repaying them. If they will not do it we petition them to sell at the present rate the Crown lands on the course of the waters to a Company to open the navigation. Since the meeting we have had letters from several parts of the country, promising to cooperate with us, if none of these plans succeed, in raising the necessary funds by imposing a local tax of so much an acre upon all lands in the Newcastle District. The thing is receiving so much general attention now that I think it must soon be done. About £300 000 will be required, and I should think that the mill sites which would be created at the locks would sell for near £100,000. This would bring it up as far

as Peterborough. About £150,000 more might be wanted to extend the navigation to Lake Simcoe. . . .

The following is a statement which will give you a pretty correct notion of my financial situation. Of this account I must observe that I had brought down with me most of the data, but I find them now insufficient to give a full account. My miscellaneous expenses of this year I cannot yet make up; the greater part of them come under the head of provisions. It is to be observed also that the greater part of the expense of clearing has been paid in provisions and consequently about £60 must be deducted, if my account for provisions in this year had been made up.

I must also add £44 odd, a present loss by which I have gained experience, Mr. Wark of this place has failed and taken me in to that amount, but I believe I shall recover about £30.

The greater part of my heavy expenses are now over, except the remaining instalments on my land, and I have now something coming in. Besides my crops, which will now much relieve my expenditure for provisions which has been very heavy, I have been paid £25 in a bill on Jameson for Gordon's land, and he owes me £37 10s more to be paid in annual instalments of £12 10s. and my other land will soon be producing something.

Statement

U. E. Rights (one unlocated)	£112.	4	0
Land, within £1 or 2	" 90	0	0
Clearings	" 79	6.	0
Oxen £58 8. and cows and pigs £13	" 71.	8.	0
Labour (including buildings)	" 79	15	0

N. B. Some later payments omitted

Miscellaneous expenses for 1833						
Travelling, living, etc	£44	7	3			
Carriage, including boats	"21	1	11½			
Tools, etc.	"10	4	9			
Furniture, including several miscellanies	"31	0	8½			
Lumber for house, etc	" 5	2.	0			
Provisions, stores, etc	"45	3.	4			
Postages, etc., etc	"15	3	2	£172	3	2
				£604	16	2

To his Father

Peterborough, Feb 18th, 1835

You express a desire that I should continue to write to you somewhat of a journal and this in my future letters I will endeavour to do; in this one however I cannot commence the practice as I intend to begin from the beginning of the year, and I have now no time for such a long letter even if I could recollect the order of events without referring to my journal. I can only say at present that we have had a very gay winter; several parties from Peterborough and the neighbourhood have been up to see the back lakes and observe ✓ how we backwoodsmen live, and we in return, besides coming down to the Bachelors' Ball, which took place on the 27th ulto, are now undergoing a round of dancing etc., which has kept us from home for a week already and promises to detain us a day or two more. Balls in Canada are no joke; when one comes forty miles to dance one does not like to make such a journey for a trifle and one takes a spell of dancing sufficient for an average winter at home We commence at seven or eight and, as the roads are hardly safe for the ladies to drive home by in the dark we contrived, on the 27th at least, to keep them employed till daylight. We had about forty dancing ladies present and when I came to reckon up in the morning I had danced with all but two and with some of them two and even three times. On the 13th inst., we had a grand ball at Major Sharp's which we kept up till half past five, last night at Col. Brown's we stayed till two, and tonight at Major Hamilton's we are going to keep it up as long as we can find any one to dance with. My share of the dancing will however not be so great as usual as I am engaged in the capacity of butler, etc. Besides these more formal parties we from the back lakes spend all our vacant evenings at Major Hamilton's where we generally of late have contrived to get up a dance. They are an extremely pleasant family with no nonsense or formality, but I have not yet been able to make up my mind with which of the three eldest daughters I am in love. Neither do I hear that McAndrew or Macredie have as yet made up their minds, though all the world of Peterborough are of the opinion that we are three couples elect. In fact marrying and giving in marriage proceeds rapidly this year. Last year we had but one bridal party but this autumn we had two of our ladies carried off, one of them the belle of the district, and this winter two of my pleasantest partners have made their appearance at our balls as brides . . . .

I do not remember any particular news on the back lakes except that Jameson's saw mill is in full operation; that of Need however will cost a good deal more

before it is well supplied with water.* The latter gentleman I am glad to inform you has become a great favourite with us all lately. As a companion, occasionally spending a Sunday with us, he is very amusing and exceedingly good natured. Upon the whole there is now great harmony amongst us and I hope it may continue.

We made a census of Verulam the other day and find that there are thirty three families, but in poor Fenelon the only settlers we yet muster are Jameson, Wallis, McAndrew, Macredie and myself, and to keep these in order the late Commission of the peace has named three magistrates, namely the three first. I have still great hopes that next year may bring us a great accession of emigrants, especially if Sir John Colborne remain in the Province, for he has been making all Canada jealous by his praises of our Lake and the fine set of young men who are settled there.

[A letter with narrative up to May 16 was lost in transit.]

To his Father

Blythe, June 16th, 28th, 1835

As events are now of somewhat rare occurrence I must premise that on such days as are not particularly mentioned my occupation during this time has been working in my garden planting potatoes and Indian corn, and shooting pigeons, which have come upon us this year in immense flocks and devoured great quantities of my pease and oats; as they do not however spread generally over the field, but commence at one end and work their way regularly to the other, they do not cause as much mischief as they otherwise would; where they have been there is not a vestige of vegetation and we can sow something else, but the rest of the field is uninjured.

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* Need records in his diary that the saw mill began working on April 8, 1836.

You ask about the nature of swamps. I think I must have explained before. Wherever there is a spring rising, cedars which love a moist situation rise up; these in time fall down, but, as the wood is almost indestructible, the fallen trees lie on the ground in every direction for centuries, and in time block up the course of the stream, this of course soon spreads further its moisture and the same operation is constantly repeated until at last the swamp which was originally only around the spring, may extend through the whole valley. A drain however may in general be made at a trifling expense when you have once found out the spring, and at one or two dollars per acre more than hardwood you may clear the land, when all trace of swamp will disappear. These observations apply principally to patches of swamp of five to ten or fifteen acres which you find scattered through the hardwood land, and of its origin I feel convinced I have given the proper solution. Again, excepting where there is a great fall, the banks of creeks are almost universally accompanied by swamp, for the same reasons, and by cutting out the logs which lie across the creek and otherwise adjusting the drainage, such land may be recovered at a trifling expense. But there are in some extensive valleys swamps of such dimensions that it would be an enormous expense to attempt recovering them, and as the land which they occupy belongs to perhaps twenty different individuals, it is almost hopeless to expect that for many years any concert can be established amongst them to concur in a system of drainage Still no one can deny that the swamps are the richest and best lands we have, and the majority of them might be easily drained; but the clearing of a swamp always costs more than that of hardwood land, independent of the expense of draining, which among stumps is more difficult and expensive than such an operation would be at home, and people prefer hardwood land, from which they know they can get good crops for a year or two though ultimately I have no doubt the swamps will pay better Dry swamps appear to be caused much in the same way as the others, only there being more natural fall, it is but here and there that the cedar intercepts the water though they cover half the ground, in these there is always some mixture of hardwood; such is the land into which I propose for the future to extend my clearing

✓As for botany—I carry it and a little ornithology on at intervals and am beginning to be acquainted with most of the plants and birds one commonly meets with, but one is so much occupied with other things that these studies proceed slowly One cannot carry one's books about with one and if I see a new plant on my way to Peterborough I must leave it, as there is no chance of getting it home in a fit state to be examined; and except when just round home one is always in such a hurry.

This letter having been some time on hand I must continue my journal, which I left at the 14th, from when until the 20th I remained quietly at home and I remember nothing much of importance. 23rd From what we heard from Jameson it appeared that Major Hamilton and his lady expected us down to take them up to see our lakes; it afterwards appeared the note to that effect had miscarried. However I left home at four a.m. and pulled down to McAndrew's to breakfast, and he and I went on to Peterborough and arrived to tea. The Major was unwell and would not return with us, but at half past four the next morning they sent to wake us and say he was ready to start. 24th. We got up and after breakfast walked to Mud Lake with the young ladies, the old gentleman and his lady riding; we pulled up to McAndrew's before sun set. His house was given up to the strangers and we went to sleep at Macredie's. 25th. Rowed home with Dennistoun* to breakfast and then put him up to the Falls and returned to McAndrew's to dinner and slept again at Macredie's. The Major who is in very delicate health was so fatigued he could not stir out all day. 26th. Home to breakfast, McAndrew and Tom Macredie pulled the Major and Mrs Hamilton up to my house and thence to the Falls and to see some land of his on Cameron's Lake, and they returned to dinner with me. My dinner gave the last touch to my character as an Amphitryon. I have given more abundant dinners but never a more genteel or better cooked one. At the top fried bass, bottom haunch of venison, done to a turn and kept to an hour, with currant jelly sauce, one side a brace of roasted partridges with bread sauce and the other a curry—A curry!!!—a bright effort of my own genius. A half dollar's worth of curry powder from Toronto has given six dishes for gala days, the material, what was it? a cheek of common pickled pork boiled in three waters till all the salt and rancidity was away and then stewed down until very tender, the gravy a little enriched with portable soup—and an excellent dish it makes And where did I get the currant jelly, you will enquire? Wallis kept bachelor's house at Montreal for some time, and upon coming up here divided some remaining pots of preserves amongst us This may serve as hint if you send me out any preserves another year. Home to McAndrew's that night The 27th Pulled them down to Peterborough and drank tea there 28th, to-day Went to church and dined at the Major's, and stole an hour whilst the rest were walking to finish this letter, the latter part of which has been written almost in the dark; to morrow we go home.

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* Mr Robert Dennistoun who had recently, at the age of about twenty years taken up land on Cameron Lake. Later he studied law and became a Q.C. and the County Judge for the County of Peterborough. In 1839 he married one of Major Hamilton's daughters.

TO HIS FATHER

Fenelon, July 2nd, 1835

As to the shoes I confess I did not say whether they fitted me or not. A man may increase a foot or more round the waist without enlarging sensibly across the instep, and were he to fatten to the size of Dan. Lambert his feet would not grow seven-eighths of an inch longer. It certainly was a curious mistake of yours to suppose my shoes must be too small for me, especially as I said nothing about it; and to tell you the truth I did not imagine you ever did think so, but attributed your sending them to your known predilection to large shoes. They are however very wearable though, as might be expected, not quite so comfortable as those made to my measure, and I said nothing knowing of old my small chance of persuading you that I knew the size of my feet better than you But I cannot allow that it is my fault (not having told you how they fitted)

that you are now sending out a pair still larger. According to your principle—that if I do not cry out I am not much hurt—it might have been natural to send me more of the same size, but I do not know upon what system of logic you formed your reasoning that as I did not say these were too large they must necessarily be too small. Moss at the toes may do to correct an unavoidable evil, and loose shoes may do very well for a person who walks about the house or your smooth roads half slipshod, but on our rough roads and in our rougher woods I do not know a more fatiguing pest than a shoe too large. Excuse my warmth on the article of shoes,—it is intended to impress upon you that I do not want another pair larger still.

You have seen Mr. McAndrew, and my mother I see forms an idea of his brother from "his mild and agreeable manners and thoughtful expression." McAndrew's father died early and his brother had to perform the office of father for him, and having heard a great deal of him I feel quite acquainted with him, though I should have expected anything but "mild agreeable manners"—at any rate such are not the manners of A. McAndrew, he has almost overpowering animal spirits, and shares with his brother a temper very easily roused to something like violence, which however soon goes over, and which we knew him too well to care about, with strangers however and especially ladies A. McAndrew can smooth his countenance to as mild and agreeable an expression as e'er a Scotsman in Christendom.

Upon the subject of R. Birley it is a very difficult thing to advise. I feel inclined to think that a cleared farm is the most profitable situation though not so agreeable as the woods, but I think you overrate the difficulties and privations of the woods. You must remember that people coming up to our neighbourhood, for instance now, have not the tithe of the difficulties to encounter which McAndrew and I had who were the pioneers; and a person may go upon an uncleared farm if they prefer it without going so far as forty miles back from the nearest town. Even those who are only five or six miles from Peterborough call themselves backwoodsmen and Peterborough itself the great Metropolis is reckoned amongst semibarbarous regions by the dwellers in the front. I would not recommend any one except such as have been previously conversant with agriculture to take a cleared farm in full operation, but a farm with twenty or thirty acres in grass, and a sort of house or shanty upon it, may be bought within five or six miles of a market as cheap almost as wild land, and such a space cleared is an immense advantage as it enables a person at once to commence with cows and oxen. When I came out here first everybody here was mad from the sudden rise which land had taken all round Peterborough, and no price was so exorbitant that some purchaser was not to be found. Cleared farms consequently anywhere near Peterborough (which was the centre of this mania) bore an immoderately high price, or perhaps I might not have been a backwoods man. The cause of this was in part the sudden raising of the Government price of wild land, which enabled some speculators to get cent per cent in a month or two, and partly the real start that Peterborough had taken the two previous years, which sanguine men thought would continue for ever, and in a great measure also to Mr. Bethune (whom I must have mentioned), who was then the great man of this part of the world, and who now

has turned out to be a most sanguine but most reckless and unprincipled speculator. Last year came a reaction, but this year things I think are at about their fair value, though I think I do see some symptoms which a large emigration backed by the example of an influential speculator might ripen into another mania, against the efforts of which I would caution any new emigrant.

Besides the exorbitant price of cleared land when I came out I was influenced in going into the backwoods partly by the sort of interest which attaches to the life of a pioneer, partly by the pleasant situation and prospect of agreeable society on our lakes, and partly by my opinion, which still remains unchanged, that, however it may be delayed, the time must come when these lakes will become very valuable. I shall yet see a town at Cameron's Falls taking the lead of Peterborough.

I was led away with the rest of the mania and thought that our time would come sooner than it has. Our township after being unknown for eight or ten years took a sudden start and I supposed would continue to improve. All last year however it remained stationary or nearly so, Jameson, whose interest it certainly was to promote settlement, was so busy with making love and wandering about the country after one speculation or another, that with the exception of building his mill he did nothing; he has 12,000 acres of land and has not brought up one settler. Now however we are going to get another start, which I hope will not be so rapid but more continuous—*nous verrons*.

6th. Having been so unfortunate as to miss the Rev.

Mr Bettridge* I determined to lose no more time but to take advantage of an idle time, that might not occur again before harvest, and take John Menzies' three children down to be christened Started at half past five and got down to Peterborough after dark. 7th. Stood godfather to all the three and sent them off in my boat home, remaining myself to go up with Dennistoun, having had quite enough of my passengers. On my road down I heard that Major Hamilton's mill had been burnt down on the 4th, and upon arriving found it was too true. The sawmill, gristmill, distillery and brewery had all been burnt down in three-quarters of an hour, 1,000 bushels of grain, 3,000 gallons of whiskey, forty barrels of ale and several of flour had been consumed, nothing but one barrel of whiskey and the bolting cloth from the mill were saved. Nothing was insured. The Major, to whom from his delicate health I thought it would have been fatal, bears it astonishingly He was ill of the ague at the time, which I am afraid he caught on our lakes, but the fire stopped it immediately. I should have been the more alarmed by such a shock to the constitution if it had not been for an attack of the gout which it revived. I sat with him by his bedside for some time yesterday and he talked most cheerfully of rebuilding everything immediately In the evening he sent to desire I would come and drink tea with him and he took as much interest in all our proceedings and our hopes for the progress of the back lakes as if nothing had occurred to himself in the meantime

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* Mr Bettridge was a clergyman at Woodstock who had accompanied the son of Admiral Vansittart on a visit of inspection to Balsam Lake where Admiral Vansittart was proposing to make a large purchase

[It is not intended that the extracts made from these letters should be biographical, but the diary of a month which follows is brief, and is suggestive of the social side of backwoods life.]

To his Father

Blythe, Aug. 12, 1835.

My letter of the 8th July (concluded at least on that day) told you of my journey down and the bad news that awaited me there; the cause of my delay was partly my having sent my boat off on the 7th, and being consequently dependent upon others for my return, and partly that Mrs. H. pressed me so warmly to stay a little longer, alleging (which was manifestly true) that the Major was much the better for having somebody to talk to and keep his spirits up. What I did each day is hard to say. Immediately after breakfast I generally spent an hour by the Major's bedside, after which I as regularly found my way among the young ladies where two or three more hours used to pass away in conversation, my hands being kept employed in the ignoble occupation of unpicking, marking, darning, etc.; another visit to the Major concluded the morning. After an hour or two for dinner a chat or walk with the ladies occupied the afternoon; the Major generally appeared at tea, and after he had retired chat, music, etc., concluded the day. All very agreeable but exceedingly unprofitable, and you may perhaps say that the Major's daughters had as much to do with my stay as the Major himself—may be. However on the 15th, having been relieved from my post by McAndrew, I departed, and travelled up to

Bobcaygeon by a scow which now plies regularly twice a week, and thence on home next day

The 19th, being Sunday, I killed a fatted calf (to wit a sucking pig) and proclaimed a feast, which was attended by Jameson, Dennistoun, Need, Tarbutt and William Hamilton, the two Macredies* having gone down to Peterborough. Need having brought up his dogs we had a hunt in the morning—of the 20th—but lost the deer, however he stayed all day with me, and the next morning and again in the evening we had another unsuccessful hunt. Finally however on the morning of the 22nd we killed the deer, Need and William Hamilton returned to Bobcaygeon, Jameson and Dennistoun to the Falls, and Tarbutt remained my guest. The rest of the week was occupied with underbrushing the flat by the creek side The 26th, Sunday, a second feast was proclaimed and a second pig died. The guests were Need, Wm. Hamilton, Robt Hamilton, McAndrew, the two Macredies, Dennistoun and Tarbutt McAndrew, the Macredies and Dennistoun went home, the rest stayed and killed a deer before breakfast next morning 28th Need went home. This week all hands, guests and all, were underbrushing. The 31st. Two strangers arrived to dinner and stayed all night. Aug 1st Tarbutt left me 2nd, Sunday The Macredies dined here and took R. Hamilton away. Wm. Hamilton and I underbrushed, chopped, and carpentered during the week. The 8th News having arrived that the frame of Major Hamilton's new distillery was up, Wm. Hamilton's holyday was over and he left us. 9th. We all met at dinner at McAndrew's. 10th. I commenced reaping what promises to be a very good crop, but we are rather short of hands, as two of my men contrived to cut their feet whilst chopping last week, but they are both limping along with the rest to day. I muster in all—John, James (cut himself), his wife and three children, but one of the ✓ girls is obliged to help a good deal at the cooking. As the wheat is ripening much faster in some parts of the field than others we have taken the earlier parts first and shall easily get through it I hope before it gets too ripe. The 10th, 11th, and this morning have been awful days, the thermometer above ninety degrees and not a breath of wind, but just at dinner time a thunder storm came on and it has settled into a wet afternoon. So much for my journal up to to day.

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*A younger brother Tom, had arrived early in June.

One thing occurs to me which I must say now. McAndrew tells me that he has written very despondently upon the subject of the country to his brother and his brother seems to have spoken to you upon the subject. I am surprised you did not allude to it. Canada is decidedly not the country we any of us thought it was, but I do not go by any means the length that ✓ McAndrew does. I still think and hope that a livelihood may be made here, but this I foresee—that Sturgeon Lake will be a very changed place in a few years. McCall is already lost,* Sewers may be considered gone, and Atthill is very doubtful. Jameson, if he had not gone so far already, I am sure would like to back out, and Need is a very doubtful and uncertain person. As for McAndrew and the Macredies, my more particular and intimate friends, I feel almost confident that this time next year their houses will be shut up. What they are going to do I do not know, nor do they probably themselves, but I see plainly they are not for this country. As to my opinions upon the capabilities of the country I refer you to a book on Canada and the States by Patrick Shirreff He is a conceited Scotchman, and evidently has at starting a prejudice against Canada, but, making due allowance for that, his account seems to me the fairest and most practical of any I have seen, the account of Illinois however must be received I think with very great caution, and very heavy deductions must be made from his praises before you will reach the truth. Get the book and read it.

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*He returned to England and not long afterwards, died.

To his Father

Blythe, Oct. 10th, 1835

My last brought you up to the 12th, or I think in a postscript to the 16th of August and from thence to the end of the month not one day occurs to me either *alba* or *nigra creta notandus*, or to speak more classically *creta aut carbone notandus*. The 2nd September was a day we had been looking forward to, expecting to mark it in our calendars with the whitest of the former substance. Mrs. Hamilton and her daughters had promised us a visit and McAndrew and Macredie had gone down on the first to row them up to Bobcaygeon, whilst Dennistoun and I went in a canoe to receive them there and relieve the others. The Major had quite recovered, the new mill and distillery were rapidly rising and he was in the highest spirits, but the news reached us at Bobcaygeon that he had had a paralytic stroke and was hardly expected to survive.

Dennistoun and I being so far on our road determined to proceed and arrived at Peterborough that evening Finding the two Macs dining out we waited up till they returned and then sat up so long talking that at last it was voted useless to go to bed. About five they set off home, and Dennistoun and I having polished our backwoods integuments a little wrote some letters, made some calls, etc., and getting off from Peterborough about three p.m. reached McAndrew's before midnight only about an hour after the others, who had drawn up their boat and had a sleep on the road. After a good supper (part of the preparations for the ladies) and a pipe we slept as you may imagine not ill till morning. This is the last time I have been down, but from accounts the other day it appears that the Major, though a long time in a hopeless state, is again for the twentieth time recovering from the very verge of the grave.

Things on the farm did not go on so well as could be desired. The wheat was an excellent crop and the first days of harvest fine enough, but from the day I wrote to you until to-day there have not been I think two, but certainly not three fine days together. The consequence is that hardly a farmer in the country can show a sample of wheat entirely free from sprouted grains, and a great deal of the wheat and most of the oats are yet out in the field. I have been much more fortunate than many, though the harvest has been very expensive from the great loss of time in opening out and covering the stooks as a short gleam of sunshine or an impending shower called us away from the reaping. I still got the produce of fifteen and a half acres of wheat and six of oats saved before most of my neighbours, and though I can only rely on one stack as perfectly free from sprouted grain the rest makes very good bread, and with the exception of McAndrew's, which was almost all saved the first fine week, it is reported to be the best which has appeared yet at Purdy's mills.

The quantity as well as the quality surprised me also—twenty five bushels per acre is often talked of, but all the old farmers say they have seldom seen more than eighteen, however mine, notwithstanding two or three bushels per acre loss by shedding, from the constant shifting about of the stooks, and nearly as much more which is growing so badly as to be fit only for the pigs, will yield nearly if not quite twenty five bushels per acre fit to go to the mill, at least as far as I have yet threshed out. By to-morrow night too I shall have finished raising my potatoes on four and a half acres which will yield rather more than 1,000 bushels. An acre and half of Swedish and near two acres of white turnips with a small patch of mangel wurzel, of peas and of corn complete my crops of this year. The wheat and oats were sown in the spring with grass and clover, but this has so completely failed that I shall have to sow it almost all over again next spring and thus shall lose a great deal of time, in fact in about five acres of wheat stubble I think I shall not repeat the grass, but drag in oats in the spring. The land which was under potatoes and turnips I shall have in spring wheat and barley next year and I have about eight acres of wheat sown on new land this fall. I have also some eight acres or more chopped and burnt ready to log up in the spring for potatoes and turnips, but the rain in harvest time has stopped my burn on the small strip down to the lake and on the patch along the creek which I mentioned I was chopping in my last, and the latter at any rate cannot be burnt till the middle of next summer.

I tried both kinds of Cobbett's corn and both kinds have yielded cobs twice the size of the original ones, which looks as if they liked the country. The smaller

kind is certainly much earlier than the common corn but does not seem to yield so large a crop (I have not yet ascertained the quantity per acre), and at any rate the gathering and husking is twice as laborious as it would be in a larger sort. The larger I planted too late; it seemed to thrive better than the corn usually does, but has not fully ripened, and these last few nights my cattle have taken care that I shall not be able to estimate the crop per acre, but I should think it quite an average one. Next year I will try patches of six kinds, Cobbett's two, the common corn, the cinquantina, and two sorts that McAndrew has got from Portugal.

Here followeth a lamentation upon the climate of Canada. Last summer but one they say was an extraordinary summer; it was very hot and dry, so much so that the lakes and rivers were hardly navigable in parts and that potatoes and turnips produced very ill. Very hot it certainly was, but upon reference to my journal I find, that after a spell of fine weather that had long since melted the snow and coaxed on the vegetation, on the 14th of May there came a frost, the Lord only knows how many degrees below the freezing point, but such as to cause the icicles to hang a foot long from the roofs and the spray to form a cake of ice on the oars and paddles. The poor plants which were beginning to show their noses above ground in the gardens and fields! It appears also that on two or three mornings in the latter end of June there was ice of tolerable thickness at sunrise, which of course would prove satisfactory to corn, cucumbers, kidney beans and other tender vegetables. It appears too that on the night of Sunday the 28th September there came a frost that laid my potatoes as flat and turned them as black as if they had never been either green or upright. From the 14th May to the 28th September is four months and fifteen days to which this extraordinarily hot summer was limited, for the two frosts which bound this period were sufficient to kill any vegetable thing of moderate delicacy of constitution which might be above ground, not to mention the slight warnings of their fate which they received in June. By a further reference to the same authority I perceive, that being on our road down to Peterborough on the 30th October we were stopped by ice and on the 12th December the lake bore for the first time from McAndrew's, and even then it would not have borne a much heavier weight than mine, or indeed myself, if I had not been on snowshoes. Here then is a period of one month and thirteen days when we had neither ice nor water to travel on. Last winter they say was an extraordinarily cold one. Cold enough certainly, a great many potatoes were frosted in their pits and root houses through the country, my calf lost an ear and would have lost his nose if we had not taken him to live in the kitchen, and many mornings my cattle, having lain down during the night, were so stiff that we got them up with difficulty when the sun had been an hour or two up. In this helpless state it is said many cattle were eaten alive by the pigs. Well, but it was extraordinarily cold last winter likewise I suppose it was extraordinarily long, at least the navigation was stopped on the 20th October and on the 25th April I had to break through the ice to get my boat launched when going down to Peterborough, giving a period of five months and twenty six days of winter, and for upwards of a month the ice had ceased to be safe for anything but foot passengers. This spring there was no remarkable late frost but the weather long continued cold, and seeds sown in the latter part of May soon got the start of those sown earlier It may be too much to attribute to the climate the caterpillars that destroyed my wheat and the pigeons which commenced upon my peas and oats and, as far as they went, cleared the ground so effectually you never would have guessed anything had been sown, more especially as they were said to be in unusual quantities this year And I suppose I must be content with the same excuse for my grass and clover seeds having failed, for the fly having eaten three sowings of Swedish turnips and two of mangalwurzel, and notwithstanding repeated sowings having left me in the garden one solitary eatable radish and not a plant of any kind of cabbage, not to mention the nameless insect or whatever it is that ate off day by day as they appeared above ground the young plants of celery, lettuce, carrots and onions (N.B onions from seed—from top onions I have a good crop—did you ever see top onions in England?) so that I have none of the two former and not above a handful of each of the latter The next black day in my calendar is the 5th or 6th August when we had a frost, which though it did me little or no harm killed many an acre of potatoes in low situations back in the bush It is one great advantage that we have near the lake and in high and dry situations, that we feel no ill effects from frosts which destroy everything in back clearings when one would have thought the bush would give them shelter. I say nothing of our wet harvest because I believe that it at any rate is an almost unprecedented occurrence, and I must acknowledge that that inexorable fellow the frost has treated us on the Lake shore at least very lemently this fall. My kidney beans and tomatoes only yielded to his power the morning I began this letter. I wonder that I can have written this Philippic against the climate of Canada at a moment when for a week past (to-day is the 15th) I have been enjoying weather which if I looked only to my comfort I would wish to last all the year round. We are in the middle of the Indian summer, with slight frosts at night and the thermometer seldom above fifty-four or fifty five in the day, but the sky is without a cloud and the lake unruffled by the slightest breath of air, so that you may hear the wild ducks splashing about at a mile off, a slight haze spread over the face of the country is perhaps all you would wish away. I don't know whether this Indian summer is as healthy as it is agreeable, at any rate I have somehow or other caught a cold which may perhaps have inspired me with a little extra acerbity, but I give you simple facts and

"Facts are chiels that winna ding
An' downa be disputed."

Oct. 16. One more drawback to this climate I must mention and that is—ague. We used to think Sturgeon Lake almost exempt, and certainly it is better than Ops and some other places, but Need, Boyd[*] and both Mr and Mrs Frazer set the example this spring at the lower end, and after having sent down both Major Hamilton and one of his sons with an attack during the summer it has now fairly commenced amongst ourselves; McAndrew and both the Macredies have had slight attacks I don't believe that care is of any avail in keeping off the ague, at least we have now been for two summers oftener wet than dry I believe and yet we felt no ill effects, whilst other cautious people—Need and Boyd for instance—took it. It must be acknowledged however that the night when McAndrew's symptoms first appeared he had been up to the knees in the lake and sat all evening and slept all night in the same clothes, and in consequence of this warning I have since been more cautious. The Macredies were always rather given to changing stockings, and Jameson's projected marriage had already wrought a wonderful change in him. When I first came up the lakes I carried a spare pair of socks, and they were alternately on my feet and drying in the sun, but I soon got tired of that In fact in summer one cannot keep dry; if you walk in the bush you come occasionally upon a swamp, if you go in a canoe you have on shallow shores to step into the water to avoid hurting the bark, and our boats, what with the original imperfection of their structure, the cracks which the heat of the sun forms and the rough usage they get in drawing them up on stony shores, by concussions in rapids, etc., by which their seams are opened, are never so tight but that our feet get wet in them, not to mention the wading which we are not yet free from. However it does not much signify if the only ill effect is an occasional fit of ague, from which even otherwise we could not reckon upon being free.[*] You will plainly see from the whole tenor of this letter that Canada is not in my opinion that Eldorado which most of the books you see at home would fain have it believed, but still I have not given the country up. The greatest difficulties are now over and I will give it a fair chance before I condemn it. The settlers who have come out within these last few years are falling off by degrees, but new ones are still coming, as confident and high in hopes as their predecessors were. I am told that numbers are deserting Lake Simcoe and other pet settlements. As for us, numbers have never come amongst us as yet, but we are losing some of our few. Dudley is off, to join Col Evans in Spain I believe, the Macredies are still putting off their departure but they will not linger through next summer, Jameson, if it had not been for his projected marriage, would have been off too, and McAndrew you will see in little more than a month after you receive this. He having been sanguine had gone I think into the other extreme, but still intended trying the country one year more. The news however of his brother's failure in Liverpool has decided him and he will leave us almost immediately.[†] He will be a great loss to our society, however society will be a very secondary consideration with me next winter I am going to keep no servant, and as I shall have twelve pigs and the cattle to look after I shall never be able to leave home Perhaps Dennistoun and the Macredies may come to see me once a fortnight, but otherwise I shall be my own company

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[*] Mr Mossom Boyd of Bobcaygeon. He came out in 1834 at the age of 19 and settled on the north shore of Sturgeon Lake about half way between Bobcaygeon and Sturgeon Point. A person of great energy and industry, he was said to have chopped his clearing himself. He was the only one of the settlers who stayed on the lake and he prospered in his tenacity. He bought Mr Need's mill property in Bobcaygeon and did a large lumbering business from that centre, until his death in 1883, the business continuing in the hands of his sons. In the beginning of his career as a lumberer he rafted square timber to Quebec to be shipped to Europe after the manner then practised. John Langton was for some time partner with him in this business and gives some account of it in these letters.

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[*] He knew more about ague when it came to its climax in 1846 when whole families lay helpless together and somebody who might be able had to get in their harvests. In a note made many years afterwards he said, "There were a great many deaths, principally the very old and the very young and sometimes we had difficulty in finding men strong enough to carry the coffins up to the churchyard." It is noteworthy that a letter written in the ague year by another member of the Blythe family says, "The mosquitoes have been a dreadful plague this summer. I never knew them so numerous."

[†] Mr McAndrew returned to England to go into business in Liverpool, but in 1847 went to New York where he carried on a successful forwarding business, retiring to England in 1876.

I have run on at such a rate about climate, crops, etc., that I have no room left to answer your letters, I must however acknowledge receipt of the two packages, all the contents of which were very welcome, but the stock and waistcoat might have been dispensed with, as they are articles of attire which I never wear I couldn't help smiling when I unpacked them, so strongly did they contrast with my usual dress, viz., white trousers or such as were white on Sunday morning, a red shirt open at the breast and tucked up above the elbows—*et voilà tout*—a coat never comes over my back except at Peterborough, or when I call on Mrs. Frazer I do however carry a coat about with me—a blanket coat, the most comfortable and lasting wear I know, but it is seldom used except to sleep in at strange houses though very useful to kneel on in my canoe. This summer Robert Hamilton,* whose head quarters here were at McAndrew's, stayed a week with me, and the day before he went two strangers dined at my house To do them honour I put on a coat to dinner and said very gravely to Robert, "Bob, put on your coat" Alas we found out after some hunting that the coat had never left McAndrew's—What a long story of coats!

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* The Hon Robert Hamilton, second son of Major Hamilton. He was at this time eleven years old, having been born in Ireland in 1824. He entered the service of the Hudson's Bay Company in which he rose to be general inspector. After the settlement following the Riel Rebellion, he became a member of the North West Council. He married the daughter of Robt S Miles, chief factor of the Hudson's Bay Company

Peterborough, Oct. 22 McAndrew has sold his place and will be off in a fortnight to the regret of everybody. I never knew such an universal favourite His successor is a Mr Hackett, a West Indian with a family He himself will take possession immediately and he expects his family to join him He is a very *débonnaire* sort of a man about forty or forty-five; but however agreeable he may be he must suffer by a comparison with McAndrew.

Admiral Vansittart* bought 24,000 acres at the sale and he is bound to bring out thirty families next summer Mr Rebridge who is his managing man is to live on Balsam Lake this winter and go himself for the settlers next spring

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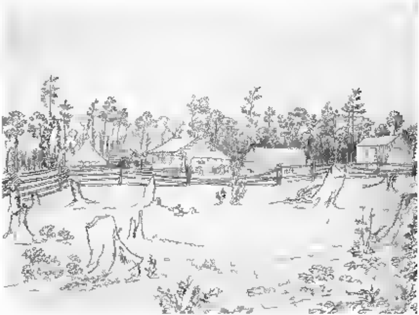
* Admiral Vansittart though his home was near Woodstock, had afterwards a house on Balsam Lake, a log house which is still in use, as part of a larger residence.

POLITICS,
AN ELECTION,
CHURCH BUILDING,
ETC.



BLYTHE, THE ORIGINAL SETTLEMENT

A sketch by Anne Langton

The barn was built soon after his return (p 174)
The tent was set up as a dining room for his friends, when he kept bachelor's house in the old quarters while the family lived in the new house (p 184)

LETTERS OF 1836 AND 1837

[Since the date of the previous letter a visit had been paid to England: recorded by a letter describing the return voyage from Liverpool to Boston which took thirty days, from May 10th to June 9th, 1836.]

To his Father

Blythe, June 21st, 1836

You see from my date that I am once more at home, but before I tell you how I found things here I must first conduct myself so far.

I wrote to you on the voyage and concluded my letter as the pilot came on board. This was Thursday and the same evening I landed in Boston and having taken leave of my fellow passengers continued wandering about the city till bed time. In point of regularity and the beauty of its public buildings it is inferior to Philadelphia and in size and business of course it ranks below New York, but I prefer it much to either. It is the only American city I have seen where the dwellings of the rich stand together, unconnected with the stores and warehouses. Here there are many streets containing nothing but handsome houses and most of them in small gardens and the streets are lined with magnificent chestnuts, horse chestnuts, walnuts, elms and plane trees which often completely meet over the street. Besides these there is a very handsome and extensive park in the city with beautiful rows of trees much superior to the public walk at New York and the public buildings are many of them very handsome

[The journey from Boston to Oswego was by way of the Hudson River and Oswego Canal, as in 1833, but on this occasion railways came in as connecting links; one from Boston to Providence to take the boat by Long Island to New York, and a second from Albany to Schenectady where the canal trip began.]

At Oswego I met Mr. Stewart[*] of Peterborough and his daughters who told me all the news of Upper Canada, which is of considerable importance. The House of Assembly as you will have heard stopped the supplies[†] and the Governor has dissolved them. Several of the old bureaucracy, thinking I suppose to be wiser than your Lords at home, have yielded to the Radical party and deserted Sir Francis[‡] in his struggle with the House of Assembly, and their places in the Executive Council have been filled up by better men. I take it they rather repent their false move. I think likewise the Radicals perceive their mistake by this time; they have touched the people in their pockets, the ill effects of their measures have been felt in every man's private concerns and it will take a great deal of their oratory upon the speculative question—whether the Executive Council is to be responsible to the people of Canada or the Colonial office—to make men forget the tangible evils produced by the stopping the supplies. The effect of this measure has been, besides the inconvenience which must necessarily result everywhere from such a step, that the money, which had been granted for roads, canals, etc., all over the country, cannot be expended. Now the cry in Canada has always been—open us the navigation of this river or grant us money to make that road, and now, when more money had been granted than usual for such purposes and every body was cock-a-hoop, the disappointment is proportionately great when these sanguine expectations are suddenly crushed. Besides, there is hardly a farmer anywhere who had not proposed to himself to get good wages this summer at some of these works, or to find a demand for his pork or flour in consequence, or to reap some private benefit himself besides the general improvement resulting to the country. And it unfortunately happens that, just at the time these works here are stopped, our neighbours in the United States have been dividing amongst the several states large sums of the public money for erecting fortifications and for other public works, and great numbers of the Canadians, in want of work at home, have gone across the lakes. The consequence has been that addresses have poured in to the Governor from every quarter calling upon him to dissolve the House, and in my opinion now that the call has been obeyed not half of the Radicals will be returned again. It appears to me to be an important crisis; and though the country may not go entirely to the dogs if the Radical party get into power again (which is the general opinion) at any rate it will have the effect I know of deterring many people from investing capital here and even induce others who have embarked to draw out—if they can. The governor appears to be a very clever and most determined man, but I must say I don't like the style of his answers to the addresses, they may be suited to the majority of those he addresses, but there is a great want of dignity in them; he talks too much of himself and condescends too much in attacking the Radicals, whilst the style is almost colloquial, and many of them look almost like electioneering addresses. However they take wonderfully with the *profanum vulgus*. In one of these performances he certainly shews up the Radicals famously; it appears that under the name of Commissioners for public works, for school lands and for one thing and another these chaps have been voting away to each other sundry large sums and Sir Francis has published a list of them, in which appear Peter Perry (the Radical leader), for seven commissionerships £1,500 a year, Bidwell (the speaker of the house and late leader), £400, and many others. Peter Perry has canvassed three places but has no chance whatever. Mackenzie, who was the O'Connell of Canada, the great author of the Grievance Report, has voted against many of his own grievances because the Governor was ready to redress them, and though he will come in, he will be comparatively innocuous, the very Radicals are ashamed of him.

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[*] Hon. Thos Alexander Stewart. (See Note p 7)

[†] An error corrected on p. 171

[‡] Sir Francis Bond Head, who succeeded Sir John Colborne

Upon the whole, I rather like the appearance of things; the Radicals have gone a step too far and I hope we shall hear little more of them for some years to come. But one Act they have passed which, though praised by everybody I have spoken with, will, if well considered, do great injury I think to the country. With a view to prevent the exportation of specie to the States—and the banks there have lately been running upon banks here considerably—our legislative wisdom has ordained that an English shilling which used to pass for 1s 2d shall henceforth be a legal tender at 1s 3d and a sovereign which used to vary with the exchange from 23s 6d to 24s shall be of the value of 24s 4d. Now it appears to me that this difference is

so great that it would be worth while for the merchant in Lower Canada and the States to import English silver and force it upon us in payment for our grain, etc. at 1/3 p. shilling, whereas when we come to buy them they will only take it at its intrinsic value which is scarcely 1/2¼ at the usual rate of exchange, whereby upon every such double transaction Upper Canada will be a loser of about six or seven per cent. What effect will it have on the exchange? Many people instead of drawing upon England will import specie no doubt and the exchange will rise *pro tanto,* but what effect it will have on the exchange between here and Montreal or the States I can't make out. One thing however is certain, that the passing of this Act put £15,000 into the pockets of the Bank of Upper Canada, and it is a curious coincidence that full one half of the House of Assembly and nineteen twentieths of the Legislative Council are deeply interested in the said Bank. But though they made such a profit upon the specie in their vaults, it may not be so much to their advantage after all, for besides the loss they must sustain in their interchange of notes with the States banks, the amount of British silver which will flow into the country will very much diminish their issues of notes I should think.

Whilst upon the subject of banks I may as well observe that the Land Bank which I told you of has totally failed, but some gentlemen about Peterborough have taken it up with some modifications and are about starting it again. I have no confidence either in them or their system and would not take their notes to any amount. Our Farmers Bank however is in a flourishing condition I understand and a branch of the Com

mercial Bank is about to be established at Peterborough.

This has been a very long digression, I must now return to my journey but you must expect another touch of politics in my next after the election

I left you last at Cobourg on Thursday morning. After breakfast I joined Mr. Stewart in a waggon up to Peterborough, raining tremendously all the day. Blythe at last came in sight, all right and where it used to be, and we found Dennistoun and Gawin and Bob Hamilton with Tom[*] on their road from the mill. John Menzies was almost out of his senses for joy, for he was much alarmed with the responsibility that would rest with him if I had not come out before Tom left, and my letter to Tom not having arrived they were in the dark respecting me. John paid me the compliment to say that "By gosh and by golly he was as glad as if I had been his father." In excuse for his vagaries I must say that the previous day being the 18th[†] (this unexpected date shews me my letter ought to be dated the 22nd) John had gone to visit Wallis, and upon stating that there was no whiskey at Blythe and that by an article in his agreement with me he was secured the right of getting drunk on that day, the necessary article was supplied and the effects might not have worn off. However all were glad to see me and not the least old Neptune who sat looking at me and brushing the floor with his tail by the hour

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[*] Tom Macredie the younger brother. The elder Macredie had accompanied the writer to England and did not come out again. He and his brother, after other adventures, finally settled in Australia. About 1870 there came to Ottawa from Australia a long letter from W. A. Macredie who, having seen in a newspaper a notice concerning public accounts of Canada which was signed John Langton, wrote an account of his doings since 1836.

[†] The anniversary of Waterloo.

John was dispatched to the Falls for Wallis and Mr. McLaren and we spent a pleasant evening.

Monday, after all were gone Tom and I went over the farm and found everything most satisfactory excepting the destruction of some hundred bushels of potatoes by the frost and a field of four acres of wheat so destroyed by the surface water pouring down in the spring that it was resown with barley.

Tom has been most industrious and economical, rather too much of the latter if all stories are true—of his living on bread and milk for a week and going to dine with Wallis on a Sunday to repair the waste of the system. At any rate when I arrived there was nothing in the house but flour, potatoes and milk, and a chance haunch of venison. Tom has kept most accurate accounts upon a system of his own invention which amused me so much I will give you a specimen. Thus, some items from May.

Whom	*When*	*Things given away*	*Things rec'd.*
The cow	2nd		a heifer.
John	3rd		a day's work
Alexander	5th	4½ lbs salt	
Little sow	7th		6 little pigs.
Weather	8th		the first shower of rain
Boyd	20th	The black ox (lent)	
Myself	22nd		the tooth of a rake in my foot — most horribly sore.

Tom was a good deal cast down when first he got his recall,* but he is getting reconciled now though he still says whenever he is his own master he will return. About a month ago he got the ague and took so little care of himself that Wallis took him up to the Falls and put John Menzies in possession of Blythe. The ague is bad this year, but he and Mrs. Frazer are the only persons who have had it on the lake yet. The gentlemen at the lower end want to join us in the parson but want a church of their own and propose spending some of their money on it,* if he does go occasionally there to do duty it must only be in proportion to their share of the funds. Wallis and Dennistoun have got about £150 and expect a little more; Jameson has got no answer, if he has written which from his dilatoriness is doubtful. He has never brought his wife up and I think will go home. Capt. Dobbs is coming out again. I think I must have mentioned the expected settlement of Capt. Purdon and his family; they are now up and their house nearly ready. His friend Capt. Davidson is also to be a settler. There is a report of the admiral's settlement being given up, but they are still going on. Wallis takes admirably to the country, is very industrious and has made astonishing improvements at the Falls. The rye grass and trefoil are working very well.

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* Brought by the writer from the elder Macredie then in England.

I go down to the election to-morrow but probably shall not go to Toronto for three weeks—they are too busy at the Government offices to attend to me.

To his Father

Toronto, July 13, 1836

In my last letter concluded at Peterborough I brought my motions down to the time when I was

starting for the election.* Tom Macredie was left at my house in charge, though with the exception of weeding potatoes there was nothing to take charge of, and Wallis, Dennistoun, Gawin Hamilton and I went down in Wallis's new gig.

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* Need describes the opening of a church in "our settlement" which should mean Rokeby and Bobcaygeon, on March 9, 1836.

Before I get you any farther on the road I must introduce you to the Calypso, who will cut a prominent figure in the events of the ensuing week.

The Calypso, (for you must know that the whole naval armament belonging to Fenelon Falls whether canoes, scows, skiffs or boats are all named after some of the characters of the Archbishop of Cambray's epic), the Calypso I say is a two-oared gig brought out by Wallis from Glasgow, and, though being built solely for speed she is much too slight to carry a load or be of general use in such a rough country as ours, she is extremely convenient to go down to Peterborough in and she will serve as a model by which our boat builders may improve.

As the Calypso was destined to carry the honoured weight of our candidate McDonell it became necessary after she had carried us to Mud Lake that we should carry her to Peterborough,† and as the road had been newly ploughed (a manner of equalizing the ruts and holes which is called turnpikeing in this primitive country), and there had been heavy rains for a week before, I can assure you we had no sinecure. We picked up three volunteers by the way and they occasionally gave us a spell, but nevertheless we were unanimously agreed that though very light on her own element the Calypso is confoundedly heavy on a ploughed road, a truth to which two black patches on my shoulders testify to this day. The old steamer on the Otonabee which had been sunk last fall below Peterborough, having been raised and refitted to carry down our voters, was now ready and was starting the next morning for the Rice Lake to tow up two large scows to serve in the same cause; but unfortunately as the steamer, like everything else here, was in debt and the creditor was a leading Radical below, a report was spread that she was to be seized at the Rice Lake and Wallis was requested to take down his crew in her for the double purpose of throwing the bailiff into the lake if he ventured on board and of keeping an eye on the Captain who was too well known as a Radical to be trusted so far alone. We four accordingly with T. Fortune, a younger brother of J. B. F.,* and Wallis's servant went down in her well armed with shilelaghs, and after a tedious navigation of a day and a night returned without even the satisfaction of meeting a bailiff to duck.

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* The Sully election. The candidates were Henry Ruttan, Alexander McDonell, George M. Boswell, and Dr. John Gilchrist. The last was in sympathy with Mackenzie. McDonell was elected.

†Usually called six or six and one-half miles.

On Monday morning at five o'clock we started with the steamer full of voters and the Calypso in tow until we came within six or seven miles of Sully on the Rice Lake where the election was held, when we took McDonell with Messrs. Shaw and Kirkpatrick† on board, and Dennistoun and I pulled them on to Sully, beating the steamer by half a mile—or rather keeping our distance for we got nearly as much start of her. We stayed on the ground till all the speeches were over and

then rowed off to Spoke Island about a mile and a half from Sully in the middle of the lake, which we had fixed upon for our encampment and which for the future, in honour of the cause, has been named Constitution Island.

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* J. B. Fortune, who married one of the daughters of Major Hamilton.

†Mr. Stafford Frederick Kirkpatrick, a barrister, later Q.C., who at this time, at the age of 25, was settled in Peterborough. He afterwards went to Kingston to join his brother Thomas, the father of Sir George Airey Kirkpatrick, Lieut. Governor of Ontario from 1892 to 1897.

We had brought down with us a large marquée which had served as a hospital tent during the emigration of '25 and '26,* and as a raft touched at the island in the afternoon we impressed sundry boards which made us a long table and benches The island is about twenty or thirty acres in size and beautifully situated to command a view of the other islands and the whole extent of the lake, and being covered with natural grasses and only a few oak trees and shrubs scattered about it, it made an excellent situation for an encampment Our party consisted besides ourselves of Shaw and Kirkpatrick,—Wallis's man attended as cook, etc We each brought from Peterborough lots of cold prog; this with venison and fish which we got from the Indians afforded us good living and we always had half a dozen guests, either of our friends at Peterborough or of the gentlemen who came up to vote from other parts of the county, besides our candidate who usually spent the evening with us, and we often had very good speechifying We spent a very pleasant week altogether, and if our presence was not very useful to the cause (Wallis being the only voter) we certainly added much to the animation of the scene The beautiful little Calypso with her flags flying and her crew all dressed alike in striped guernsey frocks, white trowsers and low straw hats with blue ribbands, and each a British ensign as a scarf, rowing to and from the island and taking out the candidates every morning to address the electors as they came in in the steamboat, was a sight that Rice Lake had never seen before—I guess

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* The emigration of Irish settlers to Peterborough under Peter Robinson, who was afterwards made Commissioner of Crown Lands

All this is very ridiculous on paper, but in the midst of an election it is another thing.

On the Friday we pulled to the head of the lake which is about four miles from the polling booth for the County of Durham where I gave my vote, but for this solitary vote which was not wanted we lost all the fun at Sully, the Radicals having given in during our absence, McDonell and Ruttan being 176 ahead and 65 voters in possession of the polling booth. Upon hearing the news we hurried back and by our haste lost the fun at Durham likewise, the Radicals there giving in half an hour after

The next day we packed up our duds and returned up the Otonabee in tow of the steamer, but something having gone wrong she had to stop so often that at last about ten o'clock we left her and pulled up the rest of the way to Peterborough again about half an hour too late for the bonfires and illuminations with which that ancient city celebrated our victory

There was astonishingly little fighting considering the number of wild Irishmen we brought down, but they were altogether too strong for the Yankees, who after giving their votes generally mounted their horses and made off, so for want of better game our Patlanders occasionally got up a snug fight amongst themselves, but though there were three or four *kilt* I did not hear of any very serious damage

The Constitutionalists throughout the country have gained a glorious victory. Mackenzie is turned out which we had hardly expected, Perry having no chance on his own interest was taken up by Bidwell, who hitherto has always been able to bring in with himself a member for Lennox and Addington, but the loyal party turned them both out, and there is now only one Radical of influence in the House. The House consists of sixty three members and of the majority who threw out the supplies only thirteen have been reëlected and only seventeen Radicals in all. I should be almost afraid that the Tories will be too strong and get back to some of their old tricks now that like the bull in the china shop they have it all their own way; but the people will watch them closely, and I have great confidence in the determination of Sir Francis Head to redress all grievances, which I don't think now are many. I have sent you by Tom Macredie a copy of the report of the Committee upon the subject of the Executive Council, the subject on which he split with the House, and as they touch upon most of their favourite topics in it, it will put you somewhat *au fait* as to our politics. But remember that it is only a party report and do not make up your mind till you have heard—*alteram partem*.

In my last I spoke of the money bills, as if the House had refused to appropriate money for them,* before I closed my letter I perceived my mistake but forgot to correct myself. The money bills passed both Houses, but Sir Francis suspended his assent upon the supplies being stopped, and thus the Radicals have tried to throw the blame of the Act upon him but he made known to the House that if the supplies were refused he would withhold the royal assent from all the other bills, and thus they acted with their eyes open. With whom the fault lies signifies not much, for the thing

* See p. 160

itself is not of much consequence except a temporary inconvenience, though I have no doubt it had an astonishing effect upon the elections

After spending Sunday in Peterborough we returned up the lakes getting some extra men to help in carrying out the Calypso Having seen everything going right at home and contracted for building a barn and logging up about ten to fifteen acres I took advantage of the only spare time there will be until winter, to go down with Wallis to Kingston where we each of us purchased a boat at the sale of the naval stores His is a large jolly boat pierced for eight oars but principally intended for sailing, quite new, which must have cost at least £30, knocked down at £9 5/-, and mine a four-oared man of war's gig which would cost originally as much—price £8 10/

From Kingston I took the steamer to this place and wrote my letter up to the last page, after which I sallied out to pay my instalments at the Government offices but on my road I learned that Sir Francis had made a general clearance, and amongst the rest Peter Robinson, the Commissioner of Crown Lands,* had that morning been displaced

As it was useless of course to introduce my business to a man who had only been a few hours in office, I took the opportunity of going across to Niagara where I spent three or four days with Sawbridge †

This morning I have called on Sir Francis Head who is a very agreeable little man but in one respect inferior to his predecessor, Sir John—he never asked me to dinner

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* See note p 169

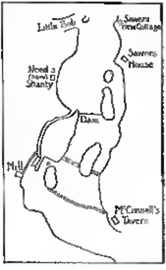
† An English acquaintance.

I have at last put my U. E. rights into a fair train which have given me a good deal of annoyance, but I am afraid I may yet have a journey down to Kingston after harvest to get one of the transfer deeds. I shall have to wait here two or three days more for McDonell without whom I cannot get my other deeds out.

To his Father

Blythe, Sept. 22, 1836

As I might have very well foreseen, McDonell, for whom I was waiting in Toronto, never arrived, and consequently I left with only half my business finished and arrived in Peterborough the next day. The next day was spent in that delightful pastime, which I had thought I was no more to indulge in, namely wading up the rapids, but I have partaken of that amusement this year to my heart's content.



The apology for a lock, which the stupidity (if in some cases it be not worse) of the Commissioners has imposed upon us, certainly facilitates the progress of small boats, at least in some states of the water, but for scows it is decidedly worse than it used to be

Formerly we used to unload at McConnell's drag the scow up the shoot, load again, and by dint of rowing, poling, warping, wading and lifting her over occasional obstacles with handspikes we got her up somehow. But now the main channel is dammed and the side channel, though up to the neck in most parts, has a bar at the top which a loaded scow will not pass, we have therefore to take the scow first in the lock and there unload her, then take her back to McConnell's, and, getting her first over the shoot wade up to Sawers's house and then drop down again to the lock to load. Boats that can be lifted bodily out of the water we lift out at the lock and carry them over to the canal but large boats must come up at (a) where it is very deep and a tremendous stream running and where I have generally had the satisfaction of going over head. Indeed wading is hardly the proper name for our operations, for a short man like me generally contrives to get up to the neck if not over head at once. Upon the present occasion we were nearly all day and it was very cold weather but we managed to get all our three crafts over the rapids and then leaving the men to get on as best they could, we, the aristocracy, pushed on to the Falls in the Calypso.

I was nearly four days at home, or rather on the road between the Falls and Blythe, getting down lumber for my new barn, and on the fourth the barn was raised, there being in all twenty nine of us, a large party for my small accommodations. How they slept I do not know, I never went to bed at all, for Mr Kirkpatrick was to give a grand party the following day to which the rest of them were gone down, and Dennistoun and Gawin, with two of Wallis's men who were to officiate as flute players, came down to Blythe in the evening in the Télémaque. We supped and sat up till we calculated we should have daylight for the rapids and then started on our journey; and though we were two good hours in the rapids, where we had once almost determined to leave the Télémaque to take her chance and find our way home as we could, we got to McConnell's before anybody was up. The morning being very cold we indulged ourselves, whilst the breakfast was preparing, in drying our clothes, sitting in our shirts till our trousers were dry, and then putting on these, whilst the former was before the fire, the wanting garment being replaced for the time by a blanket. I mention this more particularly as it is a method I have only lately discovered of drying myself when in a mixed company, and I am beginning to be more particular about wet clothes, lately, if opportunity offers of drying them, on account of sundry rheumatic pains which generally succeed a bout at Bobcaygeon.

Starting after breakfast we reached Peterborough at eleven and consequently had plenty of time to refresh ourselves after our fatigues, call upon our friends, etc., until it was time to go to the ball which went off very well. The house being but small was reserved entirely for receiving rooms, card room and supper room, and a tastily arranged covered walk led through the garden to our old marquee, which, having been our house on Constitution Island, now served as a ball room, gaily ornamented with boughs and garlands of flowers, and the grass was our floor. A very pleasant evening it proved and it lasted till four o'clock. Of course I was amongst the last to leave and the sun was up before I was in bed. Nevertheless I was up again before eight and all morning occupied in getting the Alice* up and safely lashed on to the wheels of a waggon, which were separated to the necessary length by a temporary pole This was a very tedious job, and before she was well off it was afternoon I saw her part of the way to Mud Lake and then left her to go on with Need, Atthill and the flute players and I returned myself to take an oar in the Télémaque next morning, when we were to conduct a party of ladies up to the Falls I spent a very pleasant evening at the Hamiltons and about eleven was preparing for bed, expecting not to start till late next morning, when I found it was decided we should push on all the way to the Falls and consequently were to start at five a m I had nothing prepared and it was near one before I was in bed, but next morning I was stirring soon after four collecting our party We breakfasted at Mud Lake, and about eight o'clock the expedition sailed The Télémaque, with myself, Dennistoun, Gawin Hamilton and Tom Fortune as the crew, carried Dr. and Mrs. Barclay and Miss Fisher, the latter two sisters of Mrs Kirkpatrick, and Mr and Miss Stewart, the Calypso rowed by Wallis, Griffin and two Messrs Kirkpatrick and a Mr Foster We got over the rapids without much difficulty and soon after dark reached the Falls. You may imagine I slept pretty well having had only about six hours sleep during the preceding three days and working pretty hard all the time

The next day after prayers at home, I called on the ladies, dined at Dennistoun's, and home that night. Monday, came up to breakfast at the Falls in order to take the ladies up to Balsam Lake but the weather was so bad we could not get so far, but to make amends we had the flute players in after dinner and had a dance, the first thing of the kind, since creation, in these parts. I went home at night but returned before daylight for a hunt in which I was to have the honour of taking Miss Fisher* in my canoe. Our hunt was unsuccessful, but after losing the deer we all continued up to Balsam Lake, Miss Fisher being under the guidance of myself and Griffin and in celebration of such an honour my canoe by special permission was christened the Janet Fisher. This young lady you must know occupies so conspicuous a place here not only because she is the first who has ever been so far back, but also because she is in herself a remarkably agreeable person and the best suited to the backwoods of any young lady I have seen in Canada. She is however too high game for such as me, I am afraid, having a very nice fortune of her own. Another pleasant evening succeeded and the next morning the party returned into the world again.

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* The boat bought at Kingston p. 172.

Only one event occurred in August, viz., the death of the old Major. Gawin had already commenced to settle on his father's grant on Cameron Lake and Mrs Hamilton has determined to leave Peterborough and come to live with him.

Next in order of events is the receipt of your letter announcing the proposed grant of the Society to our church, which was of course a matter of rejoicing to us. With regard to this subject things do not proceed as smoothly as I had hoped. I wrote immediately upon the receipt of yours to the Bishop of Quebec and

to the Archdeacon of York,* neither of whom has honoured me with an answer. I wrote also to Lord Mt Cashel, who is a proprietor in Fenelon, but [doubt] whether we shall get anything from his lordship Secondly the Verulam gentlemen will not join us, so that the whole brunt of the thing will fall on Dennistoun, Wallis and myself, for I have no confidence whatever in Jameson doing anything, Capt. Dobbs, who is at last arrived amongst us, may perhaps do something. We are also applying amongst our friends in Toronto, but I fear we cannot reckon upon much from them. Thirdly, Wallis had forgotten what was distinctly understood at the time though unfortunately only in conversation, viz., that all we could collect should go to provide a permanent salary, and he wanted to apply some of it towards the building and clearing I have had a hard battle upon this subject and at last it is thus settled. No money whatever is to be laid out on the church, all the expenses of that must fall upon Jameson and Wallis in whose village it is, no money whatever is to be laid out on the clearing, and Jameson and Wallis are to provide all the lumber for the house, and whatever work we cannot do ourselves, and which must be paid for, is to come out of the fund—this however will not reach £20 at the very most, but I fear we shall have hard work to get more than fifteen acres cleared But the greatest difficulty is to get the land, I am afraid there will be difficulty in getting a grant of land from Government, last year it might have been done, but what resolution the present parliament may come to on the subject of Clergy Reserves I don't know; we shall petition and I hope we shall get our grant, but if we do not there will be a considerable difficulty. Jameson and Wallis ought to give the land, as they own full 12,000 acres, being more than a tenth of the two townships, but Jameson is a very impracticable man and Wallis does not like to promise. I have however a promise from Wallis, that if the land we can procure is not convenient to the Falls he will give a town lot (half an acre) upon which we will build the house, and if we get no grant, he will give two lots. I will give one hundred acres if we cannot get a grant and I think I can promise in that case that by exchange or otherwise we can get two hundred acres at a tolerable distance, say a mile and a half or two miles off for a farm. As to the subscriptions we have very little information here upon the subject. Dennistoun and Wallis wrote under the impression that the money was to go to finishing the church, etc., and somewhere about £150 was collected, not including an offer of £50 from Mrs. Dennistoun which was declined as being too much. Now that the object of the subscription is finally decided and the proposal of the Society known, they have written again with a copy of the Society's letter and all subscriptions are to be paid to Messrs. B. Heywood & Co.,* as collected. You will therefore know the result as soon as we do.

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* Daughter of Judge Fisher of Lennox Co. and sister of Mrs. Stafford Kirkpatrick. She married Mr. Wallis in 1840.

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* The bishop of Quebec continued to be so called after the original Province of Quebec was divided into the Provinces of Upper and Lower Canada in 1791 His diocese still extended over both Provinces He had two archdeacons in Upper Canada, the archdeacons of York and Kingston. It is the former the Ven John Strachan, who was concerned—and apparently unconcerned—in the matter of the Church for Fenelon

Tell McAndrew, if I have no time to write to him to-day, that Need has set up a store at Bobcaygeon and serves things out himself from behind the counter

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*The private bank of Sir Benjamin Heywood, of which William Langton was manager.

—this after all the aristocratic notions will amuse McAndrew.*

To his Father

Peterborough, Jany 8, 1837

Almost my last sentence was that Dennistoun amongst others was certain of remaining amongst us. Now it appears that on that very day Dennistoun had determined to leave us I must acknowledge that the last Scotchman leaving us looked rather ominous and shook my reviving confidence in the country, but I am happy to inform you that such an evil omen is not likely to take place After some weeks hesitation and consultation with his brother in New York he has finally determined to remain where he is and is very actively preparing for extended operations. But besides this determination which is very agreeable to us individually I think the whole prospects of the country are materially improved Notwithstanding all the abuse which the Spectator lavishes upon Sir Francis Head and the Tories, our Tory Parliament is doing its duty by the country and seems determined to press forward what is principally wanted—great public works. Without roads canals and other similar improvements it is impossible the country can ever thrive, and this fact might have been taught them by our neighbours over the water At last we have got a Parliament that seems inclined to do us justice in this respect, and if the Legislative Council does not follow the example of the Lords at home the country next summer will be all alive with important public improvements. There is some consolation for us even if they do put an extinguisher on the bills of the lower house, in the certainty that in this country, where the abuse is not hallowed by antiquity, there will be very little trouble in getting rid of the nuisance. To the grant of £16,000 of last year, which was reserved, the royal assent is passed, and next summer the works at Bobcaygeon, Purdy's, and Peterborough will commence. £50,000 has been granted by the lower house for the Trent but has not yet passed the upper, and £500,000 for roads is in progress if it has not already passed the lower house. This however, which was principally intended to form one grand road through the Province from end to end, is not expected to pass and might perhaps embarrass our finances too much; but it is expected that, instead of it, £75,000 will be granted to be divided amongst the districts for the making and improving of inner roads.

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* In *Six Years in the Bush* Mr Need says "In consequence of so large an influx of settlers in the Autumn I had thought it prudent to lay in a considerable store of flour and pork which proved extremely beneficial to my neighbours and returned me a considerable profit. In this country a gentleman may if he chooses keep an open shop or store without derogation and it is no uncommon thing to see a man of education and acquirement standing behind a counter"

Amongst numerous public and private bills which are in progress those that affect us most are for the improvement of Windsor harbour and one for a macadamized road from thence to Scugog Lake. If these are passed we shall be almost independent of the Trent when the locks at Purdy's are complete.

But though all this is very satisfactory it does not afford me so much gratification as another fact, which, though not so obvious, is becoming daily more evident. The farmers, who for years have been entangled in the meshes of the storekeepers, are clearly getting out of their books and becoming independent, and the extraordinary price of all produce this year will I hope complete their emancipation. This looks well and will be a permanent advantage to the country and even to the storekeepers in the end

I must now speak of the church. I wrote to the Bishop of Quebec and the Archdeacon of York upon the subject and requested them to allow themselves to be named trustees. The former being in England the Bishop of Montreal answered me in a very cool strain, and the latter is too much engaged in politics* to think of such trifles and consequently left me without reply. At last I got a second letter from the Bishop, not much more satisfactory and evidently misunderstanding or forgetting what I had formerly said Upon this I applied to our parson here, Mr D'Olier (at Peterborough), and making him one of the trustees have left him to correspond with the Bishop In the meantime it is useless to leave the money doing nothing in England especially as the Scotch subscriptions have been remitted to New York, and you may tell William that in the course of a week or two we shall draw upon Heywoods for £150

My own operations may be very succinctly given The lakes closed almost immediately after my last, but opened again for a day or two and were long impassable During this time I was principally engaged working on the roads until the middle of December. On Christmas Day all the neighbourhood dined with me, then with Gawin Hamilton, Tuesday with Wallis, Wednesday at Dennistoun's, Thursday at Blyths, Friday with Mr Haig (at McAndrew's old place), Saturday at Dennistoun's, Sunday, Jan 1st, with Wallis where we had the backwoods delicacy of beaver tails On Monday we went down to Bobcaygeon to elect Township officers and dine with Need, and on Tuesday came down here.

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* He was a member of the Executive Council. (See p xxvii)

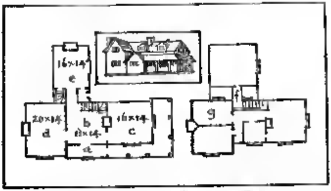
To his Father

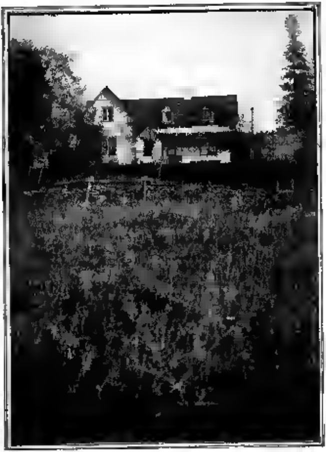
Blythe, Feb 11th, 1837

The last year's grant of £16,000 for our waters, which was reserved for the Royal assent, has been passed and an Act to amend part of it with an extra £1,000 is in progress a grant for £70,000 for the Trent has passed the lower house and has been read twice in the upper, the question of the Clergy Reserves seems likely to be at last settled by giving to the English, Scotch, and Roman Catholic churches and some dissenting congregations shares of the fund in proportion to the members of the different sects, the back townships of our district will probably this session be formed into a new district to be called Colborne, with Peterborough as the capital Farm produce, especially wheat and rye, is enormously high, wheat being sold in the front currently at 8/ and 8/6 where last year 4/- was considered a great price This is a great thing for farmers who have much to sell, but they are few and I fear it may have a very disadvantageous effect upon the country, as no contractors can be found to undertake the works contemplated next summer whilst provisions are at such a ruinous price. I unfortunately shall not have more than one hundred bushels to sell, but that as far as it goes will yield a handsome profit

I will answer all your questions and suggestions with regard to the steps which should be taken if you come out The plan which I have at present in contemplation for the house is the same which I once shewed you when last at home, which I will here append for your guidance

Ground floor From the verandah you will enter into a porch and thence into *b* the hall or whatever you call it. The porch will prevent much cold coming in with you, but as it appears to me that there is no way of keeping a house warm half so effectually as keeping the passages upstairs warm I have made this ante room tolerably large with a view of having a stove in it communicating with the chimney of the room *c*, perhaps a Russian stove, of which more anon. From *b* you go to the right into the dining room and to the left into the drawing room, *b* being lighted by a window over the stairs. I then would build the kitchen *e*, a separate house altogether, and join it to the other house by frame work; the intervening space being entered under the stairs, on the right you have the back door and on the left steps going down into the cellars, before you is the door into the kitchen. A back kitchen might be added beyond, and perhaps it would be advisable in building the chimney to have a fireplace on both sides put up even if the back kitchen were not immediately built. This kitchen being a foot lower than the other rooms, when you go upstairs you can get into the upper storey of that part at *f* and





Blythe at the Present Time

afterwards rise two steps more to the landing out of which go two bed rooms of 14 x 9½ each and a dressing room of 7½ foot square for you and thence into your bedroom. It may strike you that the window of the back room, *g*, looks not into the light of day but into the kitchen part of the building, but as that building is lower than the main one and as the ridge of the roof comes somewhat to the right of the window there will be room enough. Now when I have told you that the height of the rooms is nine feet from floor to floor or eight and a half to the beams you will have all the dimensions of the house. I ought to add that the upper storey is only a half storey, the walls being only four feet high, but as the roof has a great pitch a ceiling may be carried across at eight feet from the floor and thus but a small portion of the roof will be left exposed to admit heat or cold. I should also mention that the three windows in the sitting rooms will be more than four feet broad, the three on the gables upstairs more than three feet and the two dormer windows in the front about three feet; the exact dimensions depending upon the kind of glass which is most convenient to get.

I am aware of many inconveniences attending this kind of house, but all things taken into account and paying some regard to outward appearances I can think of no better. The question must first be decided between log, frame and stone; the latter is too expensive and the frame houses, though hardly more expensive than a good log house, are miserable shells which can never be kept warm. I therefore decided for a good log house, raised on a stone foundation to protect the lower logs and the logs to be hewn square and bedded in mortar; it may afterwards be plastered or papered inside and painted or roughcast outside. Some thing outside should be done to protect the timber, and the unsightliness of the rough logs inside might hereafter be obviated the cheapest by papering—not on the logs but on canvas—though a coat of plaster would be a more effectual safeguard against vermin.

The question being decided in favour of a log house the first objection arises that you cannot safely build a log house of two full stories even if you curtail beyond what is desirable the height of your rooms. You must therefore either build as I propose or be altogether on the ground floor. (And here I must observe that I have never felt that being immediately under the roof renders such upper rooms disagreeably hot or cold if you lath and plaster over the rafters.) To the latter plan there are several objections, viz., you must have double the quantity of roofing, which besides the expense opens a double surface to the attacks of rain and snow; you must have a greater number of chimneys which besides the expense exposes you more to fire; thirdly, it is difficult to plan such a house without losing much room in passages, etc., and at best it would be a rambling concern, and fourthly logs beyond a certain length are very unwieldy and troublesome things to manage and some at least on every side must go the whole length to bind the work well together. This last objection leads me to notice your sketch of a large square double house. It is the simplest and, except for the size of the logs, would be undoubtedly the cheapest, but such a house is difficult to plan without some loss of room in the central part, and at any rate the kitchen must be turned out of doors altogether. It has also another objection, the roof cannot have sufficient pitch to throw off the wet and snow well, without becoming a very cumbersome affair, and consequently the upper rooms cannot be so lofty as when a narrow house allows you to have a high pitch. However I believe it might be a cheaper house and, from having fewer outside walls, a warmer one, and I will reconsider the matter The angles in the roof which my house presents and it does not may be its other objection, they certainly constitute the chief extra expense, but I have never found them to leak in such houses as I have seen My outside chimney is also an objection which I do not well see how I can obviate. A Russian stove is a thing I have all along thought of building, but it is such a large affair that I have been somewhat puzzled where to put it. I don't think any of us would like to be deprived of a fireplace in the sitting rooms, but perhaps a stove between the dining room and hall might replace the fire in the former, or the hall might be made a little larger and thus a stove might be introduced into it.

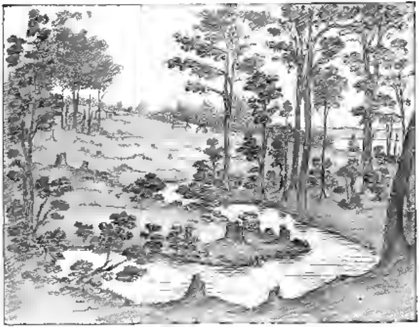
With regard to the cooking stove which you mention, I would certainly oppose such a thing coming from England, there are plenty of cooking stoves of Yankee construction to be bought here with all the coppers, etc, for £10 or £12 and a great convenience they are, though they can never entirely supersede a fireplace in a kitchen. Some I have seen sent out from England are by no means so complete and being intended for coal are very difficult to heat with wood

I have been thus particular with my description of the house, not only because it will give you an idea what furniture to send out, but because, though if you do come it is unlikely I could wait for an answer to this before commencing operations, yet something

might occur to delay you and leave me time to profit by your remarks and observations

My mother recommends me not to stint the house of room, but for the reason above stated with regard to log houses they cannot be made very large, and large rooms though pleasant in summer are difficult to heat in winter, perhaps the rooms might be a little extended by making them sixteen instead of fourteen feet wide and then the room on the right might be curtailed in length to fourteen feet, the extra room being given to the entrance hall, which would then afford more room for a stove

With regard to your stock of wine, though whiskey is the constant beverage of the male sex in this country, yet for ladies and invalids and occasional festivals a little wine is necessary and of course your best way would be to exchange your stock for wine in bond. But I would make this suggestion, that port is a wine which if once touched with frost is spoiled for ever, and who shall ensure it against such risk in this country, indeed I never tasted a good glass of port here yet Sherry and madeira on the contrary are uninjured by frost even if frozen quite solid and are said rather to be improved by it, as they are by heat, so that it is a common thing to put a pipe of madeira in the garret, I hear, where it may be mellowed by the extremes of heat and cold. Another thing I would recommend, that it should come out in the wood with an outside casing to resist depredation, and not in bottle. My wine is arrived but as it is still in Wallis's cellar at the Falls I know nothing of its safety, though a certain jingling in one of the cases makes me rather fear for the contents



View of Blythe, after Addition in 1841

From a sketch by Anne Langton

Now as a suggestion in case of any more parcels or of your coming out. The Bibles and prayer books you sent out are all gone and numerous applications for more—the Bibles especially, but the testaments do not please. Some Bibles of a cheaper description and a few like the last for old eyes and a few more prayer books would be acceptable. Secondly, you know that I was once very full of the study of the controversy respecting the seniority of Latin and Italian. I have collected a whole volume full of facts bearing upon that subject, which have led me to a very different conclusion from yours and the Italians, but I have never met with though often sought for any book with a regular argument on the other side. My hours of classical study are now few and far between, but I have still a hankering after the old hobby, and chancing a month or two ago to see an advertisement of a book purporting to be what I wanted, I wrote down the title and if it is not too dear should like to get it, it is this: *Raynouard—Influence de la langue romane rustique sur les langues de l'Europe latine*, 8vo.

As to the church you may rest easy that I will not make myself the laughing stock of the others as you say by doing more than I am called upon to do. I never mentioned to any one what I said about the one hundred acres to you, but even with a view to increasing the value of my own property, I could not dispose of one hundred acres more advantageously. Jameson and Wallis should certainly do the most of any as they will be the principal pecuniary gainers, but Jameson is a mule that will neither be led or driven, and I never expect one farthing from him or his friends. Wallis is anxious enough about it, but he has already had so much thrown upon his shoulders by Jameson that he is loath to do anything more than he is obliged to do. Still I have him now distinctly tied down to my previous proposals with the exception of the land and I have no doubt of getting that too from him when we see an actual prospect of a clergyman. I said in my last letter that we should soon draw for our funds as the exchange was so high, and we should have done so had I not missed Wallis before he went to New York. I intended to take the occasion of drawing that money to state, that unless we could come to some settlement as to how the land was to be procured I would not allow the money to be called for. I have tried to come to a coalition of funds with Atthill, whose father being the Dean of Clogher might do much for us both in London and the north of Ireland, but he feels bound to Need, and nothing I feel convinced will be done by them. Need I tried upon the subject but got nothing but vague answers, though I offered that the clergyman should live at whichever end of the lake raised the most subscriptions and should do duty at both alternately. The stumbling block appears to be that Need wanted to beautify his village with a church* which I insisted should run away with none of the funds. I still hope that we may carry the thing through this summer, sooner or later there is no doubt of it, but the great thing is to do it before the Society have time to cool. The new arrangement of the proceeds of the Clergy Reserves which is in its progress through parliament may do something for us, at any rate if it is successful it may get us a grant of land.

Feb. 13th. As to the church we have £350 which at the present exchange is about £430 currency or more, and even at six per cent. you may say £27 per annum, but if we buy bank stock or other security will probably give more than £30 Besides we have no account yet of Wallis's Irish subscriptions and perhaps there may be some addition to his and Dennistoun's Scotch subscriptions, so that we shall I doubt not make up the £35 per annum I told the Bishop we expected to guarantee and which he only half reading or understanding my letter wrote to the Society that we had guaranteed. Judging from his letters he is a very slovenly lazy personage I have consented that some small subscriptions we expect here should go to the building of the parsonage and church.

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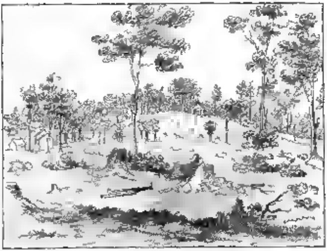
* See note p. 166.

To his Brother

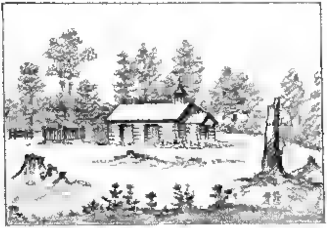
Blythe, March 10th, 1837

Our church affairs look much more flourishing I have drawn on B. Heywood & Co. for £200 sterling for which we shall get ten or eleven per cent, making £248. Wallis has a similar amount and letters from Jameson's friends promise from £100 to £150 sterling more, making in all between £600 and £700 currency For £200 of this we get eight per cent. from the Peterborough church and probably shall get as much for the rest on the best security What we have lent out is only for one year, as we intend to invest in bank stock. I think we may fairly calculate upon £50 currency per annum, which with the Society's grant will be sufficient Besides which, Atthill, seeing no chance at the other end of the lake of anything being done, has promised to join us, and as his father is a dignitary of the church we may get some handsome addition that way A Rev Mr Wade, a Church missionary, has been making his rounds and fell ill at Atthill's where he was detained some weeks. He has taken a fancy to the place and wishes to get the appointment, having some independent fortune he is in treaty for the purchase of a farm for his son on the lake, a fine lad now at the College at Toronto He has also applied to purchase two town lots at the Falls I know little of him but he appears a very gentlemanly man of about forty five, and his having a wife and family is a great recommendation. Atthill, who knows something of his family and has seen more of him, speaks highly of him When I last saw him he was too unwell to speak of business, but when he recovers Wallis and I mean to speak to him on the subject and request the Bishop to appoint him. Should we not be able to get land from the Government, Wallis will give two town lots at the Falls whereon we will build a house for him, or if he wants a better house than we intended we will do towards it as much as we intended. We have petitioned for a grant of land and shall probably get an answer in a fortnight I stated in the petition our pledges to the Society and the subscribers and requested the government to enable us to fulfil them, whether I shall succeed I doubt, for the Clergy Reserves question still remains unsettled, and the Scotch are making a great stir about former endowments As Mr. Wade wishes to reside in the village and will have a farm of his own independently it will be of less consequence, if he gets the appointment.

Parliament is prorogued and we now know the results of the session They certainly have been very Tory altogether, there is no fear of any alteration in the constitution from them and the most important question of all, the Clergy Reserve question, they have left as they found it This has been almost the only



THE CHURCH HILL AT FENELON FALLS



THE CHURCH AT FENELON FALLS

From sketches by Anne Langton

question upon which any main principle has been discussed, there has been discussion however enough in all conscience, but its only object has been to decide who should get the greatest share of the public money. The old Parliament did nothing in the shape of improving the country, the present one I fear has been doing too much. To every public work which was proposed they have granted a charter and advanced money till towards the close of the session it began to be a question whether half the money could be raised, and consequently to meet this difficulty clauses were introduced into all the money bills, at the eleventh hour, suspending operations until the governor in council should authorize the works to commence. I cannot say I like this, it gives too much power to a person wholly irresponsible to the parties granting and paying the money. We for instance have got £77,000 for the Trent, subject to the above condition, suppose only half the whole sums granted can be raised, what is to hinder Sir Francis from stopping our work altogether and laying out all the sum granted on the Hamilton railway or some other work. We shall have however £16,000 spent on our lake and at Peterborough without any such clog, and we have been formed into a new District, called Colborne, of which Peterborough is the capital. These are the two measures which principally affect us.

I accuse our Parliament of granting too much money, but they fall into the shade alongside the new State of Michigan. Michigan was made a state this winter and they forthwith incurred a debt of $5,000,000 to commence constructing three great railroads from one end of the State to the other. This system of going ahead seems to have answered in the States

but I doubt whether there is sufficient spirit amongst us to carry the system through.

To his Father

Blythe, 7th May, 1837

In reply to your letter of the 15th February I would have written sooner (though I have not much answer to make), had the climate permitted, but we seem getting worse every year here in that respect. In the spring of '34 the ice left us on the 12th April, and it has since put off its departure to the 26th April and 5th May and 6th May in the following years This is getting very near midsummer, and at this rate it will soon reach it I have nothing further to communicate than this, that in consequence of the lateness of the season you must delay your departure from England a little

I have made a contract for putting up the house, after a great deal of difficulty and uncertainty about getting anybody to undertake it, but no commencement has yet been made and I cannot promise that the house will be ready to receive you till the end of August We cannot here command hands to any extent, and the difficulty of getting provisions this year is an extra obstacle In the course of a few days I now expect to make a commencement but you had better not be in too great a hurry for it would be very unpleasant if you were to arrive before there was a roof to shelter you

Did I tell you too that I had written to the Bishop to request him to appoint Mr Wade to our church, but answering letters does not seem his Lordship's forte He must have received this last letter for I paid the postage, thinking that had been the obstacle to former letters. I certainly did not tell you that the Government have refused to grant us any land. I do not think it is worth while to trouble Lord Glenelg about it. Our only ground of application would be this—that at the time of my visit to England glebes were always assigned to churches by Government, and that upon the strength of that we bound ourselves to the Society to clear and build upon the glebe. Upon my return when we wished to fulfil our engagements we could get no land to clear and build upon. I will have a cabinet council upon the subject with my colleagues and if we think a memorial desirable it will accompany this letter.

EXTRACTS FROM LETTERS OF THE TRANSITION PERIOD

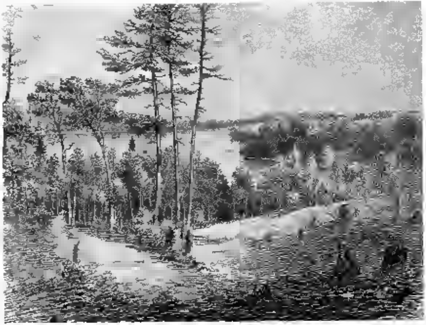
EXTRACTS FROM OCCASIONAL LETTERS AFTER 1837

[The series of early letters closed in 1837 with the arrival of his chief correspondent, his father, in Canada. Letters after this are addressed to his brother in England, who copied portions of the correspondence concerned with the transition stage of life in the back lakes. Such of these portions as seem to have permanent interest form the contents of this division of the letters.]

How to Add to Farming Some Other Means of Making Money

Oct. 21, 1844

The complaints are universal of the difficulty of making a living by farming, and I feel no doubt, after giving it a fair trial, that in the present state of affairs it is not to be done. Still I cannot bring myself to think of giving up the farm, for the chances will certainly improve every year and in time even farming alone will probably become more profitable. Were there any other means of making a little money to help the farm, the kind of life is one which I should prefer to any other, and though agriculture alone is a poor prospect, you may live better on a small sum on a farm than anywhere else. The question is what other means of money making there are, and it is a question which I have asked myself and others five hundred times without getting any satisfactory answer. Ways of making money there doubtless are, but almost any I can think of involve the necessity of moving to a more civilized neighbourhood and it is exactly this which I want to avoid. A steamboat would have the advantage of improving the country more perhaps than anything, but the chances of profit are not very encouraging and the risk and capital to be expended are great. At present the thing is out of the question because the public works from want of funds are at a standstill and it will be probably two years before the whole line will be opened. A distillery on my own creek in connection with the farm, and a store principally intended to buy grain for the distillery would I believe produce enough, but there are objections even in the way of this. My mother is most decidedly and strongly opposed to it on the score of morality, as she thinks a facility of procuring whiskey would be an injury to the country. Besides this a bill has been introduced into our House of Assembly for imposing an excise of sixpence per gallon on whiskey (about thirty per cent. on its value), which will have the effect of throwing the business into large establishments. This I conceive would be the case even in a cash country like England, but in a country like this, where it is always difficult to obtain cash for any article whilst the tax would have to be paid in money, I think it would have the effect of entirely knocking small distilleries on the head. . . . [A distillery] would very well dovetail into a farm for, besides consuming the surplus grain, the feeding of pork and beef is one of the main profits of a distillery and the farm might be principally devoted to rearing stock. The store would certainly pay and that permanently, but it requires there to be something else to bring customers to a store. Those who brought their grain to the



View from Blythe Looking Towards Fenelon Falls

A pen and ink drawing by Anne Langton

"Moving to a more civilized neighbourhood is exactly [what] I want to avoid"

distillery would lay out the proceeds at the store, but if the former were given up they would take their grain and with it their custom elsewhere, and leave for the unsupported store only the custom of those who had no grain to sell. I think I have before said to you that I know of no money-making business in Canada except the Law, storekeeping, tavern-keeping and perhaps I may add horse dealing. The two latter we will altogether omit. Storekeeping is decidedly the most money making and is carried on with very little capital, but it appears to me that those who make it pay are invariably those who have started with next to nothing and have gradually crept up in the world, increasing their business as their capital, custom and experience increased, I hardly recollect an instance of any who have succeeded in planting a full grown tree.

LUMBERING

April 1st [1849]

The more I see and learn of the lumber trade the more I like its prospects. As the lumber is consumed nearer market it must be sought for further and further back, and we on the spot have many advantages. This year's spec. will be a feeler. I entertain no doubt at all of its paying handsomely, though it is in a very small way but enables us to gain experience cheap. If we see a prospect of its really turning out a business worth while following we shall be better able to extend it another year. There is a limit below which it will hardly be profitable to lumber, as it requires as many hands, ropes, anchors, etc., to take a small raft down as a large one almost, but on the other hand those who take more than one good raft down lose the advantage of personal supervision and the extent of the stuff in one stream delays them where time is the great object. *In medio tutissimus* is the rule here, and the middle course appears always safe. The great source of failure among lumberers is their sinking their capital in securing a field to work on, often long before they use it, and otherwise extending their business so much beyond their means as [to] have to get advances from the Montreal and Quebec men, who thus get all the profit. This is the Scylla which Nicholls is always cautioning me against, better far, if your means fail, sell your raft half way than get advances to take it on. One disadvantage we labour under here. We are so far from market that we must hurry, often at great additional expense, to get down at all in one season, and then arrive late. Now the early rafts generally fetch so much more than the late ones, as they can be stripped the same season, that this is matter of great importance. Nicholls' advice is not to attempt it, but only to go at your ease as far as you can the first spring and then lay up, when you can be early in the market the next year. I think the advice is sound, as a season has to be lost somewhere in all probability, and it is better to lose it before all the expense of transit has been incurred than after. This year, however, we shall push through at all events as it is of importance to us not only to get a return for our outlay but also to gain a general knowledge of the whole route and of many details of the business which can only be learned experimentally. I think in a former letter I estimated we should have 200 spars and that the cost of going to Quebec might be divided into three equal shares of £1 per stick each, the first when on the lake, the second at Peterborough and the third from

Peterborough to Quebec, the middle portion being the most risky and uncertain. Now this year we began too late and began at a wrong place first, so that the winter broke up whilst we had still twenty spars made in the wood and thirty more to make which but for that mistake we should have on the lake now. However we have upwards of 180 out and at a cost of not 15/- each. As to the next stage we were offered a contract to take them down at £1, so that £3 we may safely say they will not exceed, and of that nearly £1, consisting of wages of raftsmen, lockage, towage, etc., are not payable, by the custom of the trade, till the raft reaches its destination. I feel little doubt that we shall make 100 per cent. of it or nearly it.

Peterborough, 23rd May, 1849

Your assistance comes very seasonably, for the burden of the adventure is likely to fall upon me. My two companions in the business are as opposite as light and darkness. Boyd* is an Irishman whose blood got an extra boiling by being born in India, and all the Flemish blood of the Dunsfords has been concentrated in Jim.† You might as well yoke a wild horse with an exceedingly sedate ox as get those two to pull together.

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* See note p. 152.

† James Wicks Dunsford, eldest son of the Rev. James Hartley Dunsford who brought his family to Canada in 1837. His second son Hartley and Mr. George Bick, his coachman, afterwards well known in lumbering circles, arrived a year earlier to build a house which was appropriately called *The Beehive*, large enough to contain Mr. Dunsford's numerous family. The family in time moved to Peterborough where Mr. Dunsford became editor of The Peterborough Gazette, and published in it a readable historical novel called *The State Messengers*. Mr. James Dunsford remained to farm The Beehive land but when Sturgeon Lake was abandoned by his neighbours he too gave up farming and took up the practice of law for which he had become qualified before leaving England. He was for sixteen years a member of the District and County Councils and from 1861 represented the County of Victoria in the old parliament of Canada.

For this reason Jem has all along held back and now may be said to have no share in the business, but if another year he can have the entire superintendence of some branch of the business where his gravity will not be decomposed by the vivacity of the other, he still wants to join us, and as a staid ox is sometimes a very valuable animal, I think such a department may be found. As for Boyd he is admirably adapted in many respects for the work he is at When a raft is once started almost every thing must yield to despatch, and a restless being who can keep himself and every thing that comes in contact with him in a state of excitement for two or three months at a time is just the man to drive a river He may want a curb at other times but there you may give him the reins The worst is that his expected remittance has not yet arrived though I have in my pocket a letter which I think contains it. At all events things must be kept going, and I am not at all sorry to have more than my share of the speculation as long as I have the means to do it There are not many pursuits in which ups and downs succeed each other more rapidly than in running a raft. The detention of our raft in the ice for a fortnight, when every other place was open with expenses running on at the rate of £2 a day was very trying to the patience, and I was not at all sorry that Boyd was attending his wife at the time At our first rapid at Bobcaygeon, which Boyd got through last year in a day, everything went wrong and we were a week. Just below we were detained three days by a head wind, and I understand Boyd was quite unapproachable Then the good qualities began to operate, for in spite of head wind and horrible weather, with the whole raft a sheet of ice, he kept all hands at work for two days and nights and when the rest gave in he stuck at it with only two others and got to Buckhorn rapids which had he not reached that night there would have been another week's delay. Now came a turn of good luck to compensate for our unpropitious commencement. Last year he was three weeks at Buckhorn and left sixteen spars behind—this year we got through in a day and a half and got all his sixteen spars into the bargain. The next place is Burleigh rapids which I have never seen in high water, but how a raft ever gets through there is a mystery to me. I do not know any particular time they left Buckhorn but there was a report here to day that he had got through. After Burleigh comes the river above this place, nine miles of consecutive rapids. The process is to break up the raft and commit the spars to the stream. About an hour after that perhaps two or three sticks reach Peterborough, the rest are left sticking here and there on rocks, dams and islands. The men follow them down clearing everything before them, which is called driving. Each stick they release of course is soon brought up by some other lower down, and as you advance the jams, as they are called, of course get worse and worse. The method of proceeding in each case requires great judgment. Sometimes you fix a windlass or have horses on shore, sometimes the men go on to the jam and loosen the sticks with handspikes, and sometimes you have to sacrifice a spar by chopping it. Occasionally you have to take off each stick singly as you would pick out spillikins, at other times a little judicious prying and shaking the holding stick will loosen twenty or thirty. You may imagine what ticklish work it is to be standing upon a jam, or up to your middle in the water alongside of one, when it begins to give way. I have seen a piece of timber perhaps sixty or seventy feet long forced almost clean out of water. It is a hard and dangerous life, but they are a lighthearted set of dare devils and the greatest rascals and thieves withal that ever a peaceable country was tormented with. Hen roosts have quite disappeared from the river side, and lambs and little pigs have to be kept under lock and key. This year the river has been very easy to run and I hope, in spite of our detention, the expense will not exceed my original estimate.

June 18th, 1849

Our lumber after all sorts of ups and downs, sometimes getting easily through bad places and being awfully detained at easy ones, has got to Peterborough at last, with the loss of only four sticks left behind and available for next year and one spoiled. As an illustration of the uncertain freaks of the Goddess that presides over lumber I may mention that we had two bad sticks, a crooked one and an unsound one, which we meant to leave behind, but like the bottle imp we never could get rid of them. The crooked one went over everything without touching and reached Peterborough where it lay exposed to public view, to our confusion and disgrace, one whole month before it was joined by its fellows. The unsound one formed the foundation of almost every jam in the river, and even after it was cut in two parts pertinaciously annoyed us all the way. My first estimate of the cost down to Peterborough was £2 or £2.5s per stick, but I do not think they have cost more than £1 10s or £1 15s at farthest. £1 more will certainly take them down to Quebec. What they will fetch there it is impossible to find out. Nobody will tell who knows, and very few know anything about that description of lumber. I know a raft last year of seventy, of which the twenty best sold for £8 and we hear on good authority that the owner was offered £5 10s for the rest this spring. Now we have very few as bad as his best, and I have had pointed out one or two of ours which they say are worth £20 or £25. This looks well but per contra I learned from the manager of one of the larger lumbering firms at Quebec that the annual demand is only for about 2,000 pieces and that their house is concerned in about 1,500, but he adds that there is always a demand for such sticks as some of ours which he saw, and I don't think he saw our best. We are working in a great measure in the dark, but Boyd will go on to Quebec. I think I shall try to run down there also when the raft has arrived, to try to learn something of our trade. Cummings, the manager above mentioned, told me that one of their foremen had reduced the value of a mast for them at least £50 by cutting it a few feet too short. When trifles make such important differences one ought to spare no pains to get information. There is a legal length to a certain thickness you must know, and our men insisted that extra length beyond what was due to the girth was all thrown away. I however got them all cut as long as they would go and Boyd came after me and ordered them after they were drawn to be cut to the right length, but I stopped it after one was cut. Again after we had stuck half the day and nearly killed our oxen with one which I had laid out twenty-five feet over the length I began to change my mind and directed them to be cut shorter for the future, but going down to Peterborough next day Boyd came and countermanded me, so in the end almost all are over length which Cummings says may make a difference in their value of several hundred pounds—in some the extra length may be only an incumbrance, in other it may be worth 10/ or 15/ a foot.

As soon as the flies are not quite so bad, and some at least of my month's occupations are chalked off I mean to go out lumber hunting. I hope we shall have capital for a larger spec. next year. I think we now know of the materials for a raft as large as this year's near home, but the place I am going to look at will be a two years' business and we have our eye on a third place, if we are not forestalled, which would keep us busy for some time.

I can see the rock, which Nicholls is always warning me of, on which most lumberers split, viz., the consuming of their capital in purchasing land and the right to lumber for future operations, to keep others out of the field. It must be kept well in mind, but it is very tempting. I can see also how lumberers come to be such rascals generally. The men steal hens and their masters steal trees. I suspect it is as dangerous a rock as the other.

I believe it is a safe rule when you wish to put a case of conscience that the wish is answer enough. Query. Do you stick firmly to steal not at all or do you make any difference in the person stolen from? Would you allow of stealing from the Queen or make any difference between land she had taken possession of by surveying and unsurveyed land? Would you steal from concession lines which the Queen has given to the public but the timber on which the Council on what authority I know not, have given to the roads, and would your being Warden of that Council make any difference? Would you (in case you should in any case allow of stealing from individuals) make any difference if an individual in question were your friend—

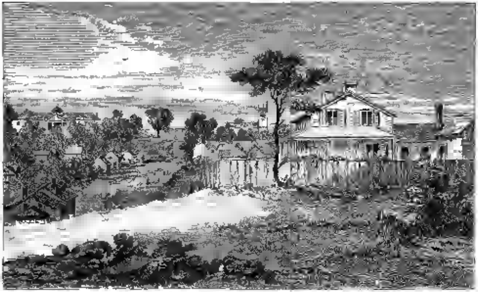
if you had offered to buy his timber or his land and he had refused—if you did not know and could not find out who owned the land? Or would you abolish the word steal and only take, remain probably in ignorance of any ownership but be willing to pay for what you take when the ownership is proved to your satisfaction? I believe ninety nine lumberers out of a hundred answer all these questions in their own favour and do many much more barefaced things.

Later than 18th June

The raft is now fairly at Peterborough which by its whiskey is as great an impediment to progress as the waters of any rapid. It is very trying to the patience, but it is not to be wondered at that the men after all their privations and hardships should get away as we call it here on the spree. This being a point in the journey where the kind of navigation changes, we pay off some of our hands. At the mouth of the Trent we pay off some more, and then the only expenses are towage when required, as the government lockage and the pilotage are generally I believe always payable after the raft gets down. It is well it is so for Boyd is unable to contribute anything in the way of cash. Any expenses below the mouth of the Trent James Dunsford has taken upon himself. As long as our personal superintendence did not take us away from home we each did what we could with [out] counting days, but from Buckhorn downward Boyd is to be allowed $14 a month, the rate of an ordinary good hand, and he is the best we have. He will go on to Quebec.

The thermometer above ninety degrees—I was travelling all the time as much by night as by day and in every kind of conveyance

LETTERS ABOUT AUDITING THE PUBLIC ACCOUNTS



THE HOUSE IN PETERBOROUGH 1852-55

From a water colour drawing by Anne Langton

LETTERS OF 1855 AND 1856

FROM JOHN A. MACDONALD[*] TO JOHN LANGTON

Quebec, 6th February, 1855

Confidential

MY DEAR LANGTON,

I have had continually before my eyes our last conversation, and under the impression that you had finally made up your mind to retire from Parliament, I spoke to Oliphant[†] and subsequently to Lord Bury[‡] and Sir Edmund Head[§] about your appointment to the office of Indian agent vice [*undecipherable*] dismissed. The salary is about £350. I may say I had secured the appointment for you when on my return Cayley[**] showed me your letter saying you had resolved to return to Quebec. I was glad to hear this as I think you worthy of a better office than settling the quarrels of demoralized Redmen with still more demoralized

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[*] The Hon. (afterwards Sir) John Alexander Macdonald (1815-1891), member of the Legislative Assembly for Kingston, and attorney-general for Canada West.

[†] Laurence Oliphant (1829-1888), secretary to Lord Elgin. In 1854 he was appointed superintendent of Indian affairs, and made a journey to Lake Superior which he described in a volume entitled *Minnesota and the Far West* (Edinburgh, 1855). He returned to England soon after Lord Elgin's retirement at the end of 1854.

[‡] William Coutts Keppel, Viscount Bury (1832-1891). He was superintendent of Indian affairs in Canada from 1854 to 1857.

[§] Sir Edmund Walker Head, Bart. (1805-1868), who succeeded Lord Elgin as governor-general of Canada on December 19, 1854. He remained in office until October 24, 1861.

[**] The Hon. William Cayley (1807-1890), member for Huron in the Legislative Assembly, and inspector-general from 1845 to 1848 and from 1854 to 1858.

Whites. Another position now offers itself for which your habit of mind eminently qualifies you, and if you do not object I have no doubt that it will be at your service whenever you please.

It is very fortunate for Cayley that Mackenzie[*] has made such an opportune exposé of the way affairs have been conducted in the different public departments. He is now called upon, without an insidious prying into the affairs of the other departments, to institute a searching enquiry into the management and accounts of all the Bureaux. You know his office is that of "Inspector General of Accounts" and that the office originally was that of Auditor General. By degrees the Customs and financial business of the Province came under his jurisdiction, though not under his patent of office, and these have now become his sole business. His duties of auditor having in fact become obsolete, I suggested to Cayley the resumption of his old duties, and the forming an audit department with a departmental head and suitable staff—the head to have the same position as Cary[†] the head of the financial branch or Bouchette[‡] as head of the customs branch. The salary to be say £500. Cayley at once approved of the suggestion and we simultaneously said you were the man to command the ship. It is proposed to come down to the House with the plan to give the Audit Branch a permanent habitation and a name by virtue of an Act of Parliament, fixing by statute its duties, salaries, etc. This will give it more weight in the country and over the officers of government who are public accountants, than if established by mere order in Council. This would [not] permit the office being established till the end of the session, which would I fancy be rather agreeable to your views than otherwise. There is a point worthy of every consideration in this matter, about which we can talk when we meet. Meanwhile think over it. Shall the audit officer be eligible for parliament? If he is, and has in fact a seat, he becomes a political personage, and is subject to change on every change of government. This, as far as you are concerned, I think would be no objection. Then a question arises whether a political officer's report would have the same weight as that of a non-political person. Cayley thinks not, I differ. Under the principles of responsibility some member of the Government must produce under his responsibility the reports of the Audit office. In fact the report must be that of the Inspector General and therefore must be political. It seems to me that it would be well to have the audit officer in Parliament ready to answer all questions and debate all matters relative to the public accounts,—just as in England the Secretary of the Treasury is always in Parliament acting as efficient aid to the Chancellor of the Exchequer. So much for this.

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[*] William Lyon Mackenzie (1795-1861), member of the Legislative Assembly for Haldimand from 1851 to 1858 and one of the principal spokesmen of the Clear Grit party.

[†] Joseph Cary, deputy minister of finance, 1842-1862.

[‡] Robert Shore Milnes Bouchette (1805-1879), a former rebel of 1837, who became commissioner of customs in 1851.

You see we have made extensive changes in Lower Canada—and though not so complete as a bystander would wish, I can assure you that we went as far as was practicable. Morris* had resolved not to go to Toronto, and as some change ought to be made and *must* have been made *now*, we thought it better to commence at once, rather than have the thing partially done now and finished next summer. Cauchon* brings strength and energy, Lemieux† commands more votes among the Franco-Canadians than any other person in Lower Canada, and his appointment stops a mischievous re-agitation of the Seigniorial Bill question. He will not set the St. Lawrence on fire, but he is a shrewd common sense man, and understands human nature as his unlimited influence in the District of Quebec shows. As we have pledged ourselves to spend no money without the previous sanction of Parliament and afterwards under Order in Council there can be no more *Piers*‡ and he can do no harm.

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* Probably the Hon. William Morris (1786-1858), who had been receiver general in the Draper administration from 1844 to 1846, and president of the council from 1846 to 1848. He retired from public life in 1853, and died in Montreal on June 29, 1858.

Cartier§ is active—too much so—and will do his work. The chief necessity for appointing him was that the large and important District of Montreal was altogether unrepresented in the Cabinet except by Drummond,** who has no property in Montreal and represents a township constituency.

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* The Hon. Joseph Edouard Cauchon (1816-1885), member of the Legislative Assembly for Montmorency since 1844. In January, 1855, he became commissioner of crown lands in succession to the Hon. A. N. Morin. He resigned the office in 1857.

† The Hon. François Xavier Lemieux (1811-1864), member of the Legislative Assembly for Lévis from 1854 to 1861, chief commissioner of public works from January, 1855 to 1857.

‡ While waiting for a steamer on the Long pier at Rivière du Loup, one day some fifteen years after the date of this letter, Sir John Macdonald, who was waiting too, told us that the pier had been the occasion of turning a government out of power.—*W. A. L.*

§ The Hon. (afterwards Sir) George Etienne Cartier (1814-1873), member of the Legislative Assembly for the county of Verchères, 1848-1861. On January 25, 1856, he became provincial secretary in the MacNab-Taché ministry, and on May 24, 1856, attorney-general for Canada East in the Taché-Macdonald ministry.

** The Hon. Lewis Thomas Drummond (1813-1882), member for Shefford in the Legislative Assembly, and attorney general for Canada East, 1851-1856. He resigned his office when the Taché-Macdonald ministry was formed in May, 1856.

WILLIAM LANGTON

Were you not glad to see old Badgley[*] housed for life? We had a good deal of difficulty but were firm.

Let me hear from you soon You will be down at the beginning of the session I hope

Yours very faithfully,
JOHN A. MACDONALD

John Langton, Esq
Peterborough

FROM JOHN LANGTON TO HIS BROTHER, WM LANGTON

Toronto, Dec. 30th, 1855

MY DEAR WILLIAM,

Having been now more than a month installed in my office I must give you some account of it and of the prospects of work before me and of the probability of my getting on pretty comfortably First my relations with Cayley have been satisfactory enough He has fulfilled his pledge of leaving me entirely to myself to do what I like, though I have some little complaint to make about my freedom of choice in my assistants. I found three clerks there who had been more or less attached to the Audit branch of his office, none of them worth much but two are practicable enough. One of them however I blame Cayley for saddling me with. He is a black sheep who has been transferred from one department to another and found quite impracticable in all—utterly useless and worse than useless Cayley knew this as well as I do and it was a mere excuse that they sent him to me with some books which he used to keep and which are now in my branch, because in fact, though he ought to have kept them, they never could trust him to do it. I have seriously remonstrated for he is in receipt of a higher salary than anybody in my office and is utterly useless to me. I have told Cayley that I have no objection to his drawing his salary and sitting there, but I will not be responsible for finding him work as I cannot trust to the accuracy of anything he does. I think I shall get rid of him before long. I have introduced three more clerks and mean to get two more. My chief clerk I have in my eye but have not yet selected and do not mean to do [so] till I get the work into something like order.

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[*] The Hon William Badgley (1801 1887) member for Missisquoi county in the Legislative Assembly He had been attorney-general for Canada East in the Draper administration, 1847-48 but he was not included in the MacNab-Morin government of 1854. In January 1855 he was appointed a judge of the Superior Court of Lower Canada.

Then as to my colleagues in the Board of Audit—one I find a very easy-going man, the chief Commissioner of Customs, who keeps his own branch well audited and is not disposed to trouble himself with any other. He will sit occasionally at the board, but will clearly give me neither assistance nor trouble. The other who has just been appointed deputy Inspector General has risen from book keeper and is nothing but a book keeper still. He seems however an honest fellow and really desirous that everything should be straight, and from long experience in the office has been very useful in putting me up to its ways. He evidently entertains a most deferential respect for me and will give me no trouble except with a few crotchets which he has. One is an old jealousy between the book-keepers of the Inspector and Receiver General's* departments who never can get their books to agree though representing the same transactions, and each of course blames the other Some years ago two sets of books exactly similar were opened for the two departments and it was intended they should be a check upon each other and that they ought exactly to correspond I think this was a mistake, for the means of information of the two are different, and even if two book keepers took the same day book as their basis I doubt whether they would produce from it similar books. The Receiver General receives and pays, but the accounts which show how the money comes to be received and why paid are kept in the Inspector General's office A warrant comes down for counter signature to the Receiver General and this is his only means of knowing to which account it is to be placed, and if the warrant does not properly express that on the face of it, he is not to blame if he enters it to a different account to the Inspector General. Or a cross entry may be made properly enough by the Inspector General of the reason of which the Receiver General knows nothing. So with receipts. But it is not often that there is £600,000 discrepancy as in Glen Mills & Co.* account this year in the two offices, in which by the bye the Receiver General was right and the Inspector General wrong, arising out of an issue of debentures to the Grand Trunk R. R. or rather to Glen Mills & Co to be held for the Province and paid to Grand Trunk R R on certain conditions. My friend Dickenson, late book keeper now deputy Inspector General, considers his books as the true standard and thinks the Receiver General should compare with them at stated intervals and make them agree, which would render them useless as inde pendent records. The Receiver General book keeper wants everything to be reported to him in detail, so as to be a duplicate Inspector General book keeper. I think both are wrong. The warrants and bank certificates, etc., should contain on the face of them sufficient information as to the account to which they are applicable—which now they do not, or only a pencil endorsation made by a clerk unconnected with the book keeper—and the Receiver General should not attempt too great a refinement in the subdivision of accounts of which he can know nothing. Though the items might differ the large heads of income and expenditure and the totals would then agree, and if there was a disagreement it would be not without its use in pointing out accounts which were not sufficiently defined and understood. Another of his weak points is that he wants our main attention to be turned to points which have attracted notice, so as to be ready to answer and defend the office when Parliament meets. I want to find out anything that is wrong though never heard of before, and set right what is known. He wants to show that the Inspector General's department is not to blame. He has also some pet ideas, not of a very enlarged kind, which he bothers me with sometimes, but altogether he is a decent fellow and is no impediment to me.

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*The Hon. (afterwards Sir) Etienne Pascal Taché (1795-1865) had been receiver-general since November 1849. On May 28, 1856, he was appointed a life member of the Legislative Council, and on April 19 he was elected speaker of that body, but he continued to act also as receiver-general.

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* Glyn, Mills and Company who with Baring Brothers and Company, had been in 1852 the London financial agents for the Province of Canada and bankers for the Grand Trunk Railway.

I told you I had been at work for more than a month, but of the accounts of 1855 which ought to be audited and printed by the end of February I have as yet only succeeded in getting hold of minute fractions, so that I despair of ever getting through with them when they do come. Hitherto I have been principally engaged with arrears which may be postponed and in correspondence to hurry on the rendering of sufficient accounts, and getting explanations as to the system of keeping the books in different departments. I have succeeded however, not without some opposition, in introducing a system for the future of quarterly instead of annual returns which will make work more smooth hereafter. This question of arrears is a ticklish one. I do not like to commit myself to going back to any fixed time with all accounts, but with some it will be very necessary, and in some of the departments I find a great disinclination to let me go back, which as you may imagine only makes me the more anxious to do so. But in the audit itself there are several difficulties which present themselves. As to payments—was the money paid? Of course a voucher should be produced to show it was—but was the work done or service rendered which the money is payable for? It is not often we get such an item as appeared in last year's Public Accounts, in a page immediately following a whole host of £1. 2. 3's and £5. 3. 6's, viz., "Benjamin Chaffey and others, for services on the St. Lawrence canals," fifty odd thousand pounds. A detail was asked for and sixty-three items given, of which Benjamin Chaffey got one of about £6,000, and, amongst others, two convents in Montreal got between them £35,000 for land bought of them. But supposing we have the whole sixty three vouchers, were there not some explanations wanted about this purchase of land—how much, at what price, what wanted for, by whose orders? The information on such points is generally very vague and incomplete, and it is difficult to draw a line where to stop in requiring details. It is clear that I cannot measure whether Benjamin Chaffey did the number of yards of embankment he is paid for, or whether the powder bought for blasting was really delivered or, if delivered, used I must stop at the certificate of some responsible servant of the public somewhere, (I rarely find any however except for large sums where no details are given), and if I am so to stop, where am I to do so? As far [as] concerns any real check I question whether I gain anything more by keeping a clerk engaged all day in checking a pile of small tradesmen's bills consisting of dozens of items each of so many pounds of such a thing at so much a pound, all amounting to £100 or so, than by passing an item of £10,000 paid to a contractor for work done, when I have neither his contract nor any means of knowing whether the work was really done One fellow has a very original notion of a voucher—he sends me his own cheque on the bank payable to himself or bearer as a voucher for certain payments which I have no doubt he did make with the money he drew The idea is too innocent to allow of the supposition of the man being a rogue. As far as I have gone as yet into the Board of Works accounts I find the most scrupulous detail in small things and the most suspicious vagueness in the larger items. I have not yet come to asking further explanations, and when I do so I am much puzzled to know how far to require details.

Then supposing a voucher produced that the money was paid and a certificate that the service was rendered, another question arises—was the expenditure authorized? The Act is silent upon this point It is contended by some that the auditor should certify before payment that the payment is authorized, and this seems to be to a certain extent the practice in England by an officer of the Treasury, but that clearly is no duty of mine here After payment however am I to say whether it is authorized? Cayley says yes if not authorized by Act or Order in Council (I know many such), but this will not be sufficient for others who will want to know whether Act or Order in Council. I think I shall distinguish, that is report, all payments on Order in Council alone, but this will be difficult unless I can get them to keep their appropriation book better than it has been done and get them to enter on the face of the warrant on account of what appropriation, or if not of what Order in Council, and furnish me with a list of all warrants—and even this will not do unless the Board of Works when they send for a warrant enter in their certificate, which they do not always do by any means, on account of what appropriation

Then as to receipts, something in the shape of vouchers is often required and is more difficult to manage. Our Superintendent of Education * gets £3,000 a year to supply school libraries, and he sends me as vouchers of his outlay booksellers' receipts and tells me he has sold to schools some £2,000. Now how can I tell whether he has not received more, for as his accounts are not published we have not even that check upon him I remember when I was Warden saving the county many hundred pounds by compelling the Treasurer to give receipts for land tax out of a cheque receipt book He argued, amongst other difficulties which he made, that that was no protection as he might enter a different sum in the cheque to what he did in the body. True enough, but that could hereafter be better brought home to him than if he had put the money in his pocket and made no record of it in his books At any rate the land tax became more productive, and we

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* The Rev Egerton Ryerson (1803-1882) superintendent of education in Canada West.

have since had no more people's land sold by mistake for arrears of taxes which they had paid. I can think of no other way applicable to some of these cases except something similar, except in the case of land agents which I will mention presently Perhaps the cases of this kind arise so seldom, most receipts being direct [from] the public chest except land agents, Customs collectors and collectors of tolls on the canals

Lastly the cash balances should have vouchers, which they never have—that is, to say where is [the] money? If in the man's pocket we must take his word for it and should know it at any rate, but if where it ought to be, in a bank, we should be told how deposited and get a bank certificate from him or a return from the bank. Last week I partially audited our superintendent of education's accounts. The whole sum passing through his hands annually is about £60,000, the great bulk of which, about £45,000, is received by him in January and July, and almost immediately paid out, nevertheless on January 1st, 1854, he had according to me, though much disguised in his accounts, upwards of £13,000 in hand, and January 1st, 1855, upwards of £9,000 Where is the money? It never seems to have occurred to anybody to ask. It may be spent or it may be at interest on his behalf I had just come to this conclusion (I mean that he had these balances) when an application from him was sent down to me to report upon in which he says that, in consequence of my having required him to send in his accounts quarterly, it would be much more convenient if instead of getting all his appropriations annually, about July or August, he were to have them paid him quarterly in advance In my report which I made last night I show that under

the nine heads into which he divides his accounts and asks for his money quarterly in advance, in all of them he has had in hand constantly for a year and a half a much larger balance than the advance he asks for. In 1853 he got his £3,000 for 1854 on account of school libraries in advance, but January 1, 1855, fully £2,000 of it was still on hand. In the same year a grant was made of £500 a year towards a museum and he got his money for 1854 in advance, but January 1st, 1855, out of two annual payments he had only succeeded in expending £75. I think that man's cash balances want looking after. He is the Pope of Methodism in this country, but he mistook his profession. Nature intended him for a Jesuit.

This leads me to another question. If there is anything wrong in an account, of course I report; if there is anything bad in the system of keeping accounts I think it is clear I should report also. But when the system of managing the public business is bad, is that any concern of mine? I doubt. The question of large balances is in the debatable ground between the last two named questions, and that I have reported upon in the education case and in the opposite case of the Lunatic Asylum. This institution expends about £10,000 of public money, receiving about £500 from paying patients and other services, and renders accounts quarterly, carefully analysing the expenditure, quite a model in that respect for our public accountants. They go on tick for everything except the small sum they get from paying patients, their quarterly accounts being a list of their debts, which they get a warrant to discharge, but the last quarter as they showed a balance of cash in hand £89, Dickenson, being zealous as a new band, deducted this from their liabilities, and they got a warrant only for the net balance. This large and admirably managed institution has therefore been carried on now for three months without a single sixpence of cash except from some paying patient who may have been discharged during the middle of the quarter, for they only make their payments quarterly. This will be amended for the future. It is much more questionable whether I should not be considered as going beyond my province if I were to report upon other questions of general finance, and yet I long to do so. We are eaten up with special funds which are daily increasing. Egerton Ryerson in his Education accounts must have nine special funds, and always keeps a heavy balance in each, as if I kept a baker's, butcher's, tailor's, etc., fund, with always enough in it to meet any possible demand during the year. He only follows the example of his betters. We are a mass of special funds, and the consequence is that like Ryerson we have always a large balance on hand. With an annual revenue of about £1,500,000, the smallest of our monthly cash balances last year was £600,000 and the average about £850,000, and this does not include everything, for some of the special funds are not kept in the Receiver General's name, and, until Cayley altered it this year, some departments, as the Crown Lands, kept a separate purse and only paid over to the Receiver General when they had a large sum, such as £30,000 or £40,000 in the instance of the Crown Lands. I must watch an opportunity of reporting it as a matter of account.

I am only just beginning to see my way into the way the different departments keep their books. There has been a great improvement of late years, in a great

measure owing to Hincks,* but there is still room for improvement. The Inspector General's Department is the most perfect but even there I find a curious want. Before the union it seems no accounts were kept with collectors of Revenue but their monthly returns were filed away in pigeon holes where they still repose. It was a great improvement when Hincks opened a sub-accountants ledger for these gentlemen who receive money for the public, but it does appear to me curious that to this day they have never thought of opening a ledger for the gentlemen who expend the public money. With such people as my friend Ryerson the pigeon hole system is still carried out. Whatever the Inspector General may do I mean to open a ledger for these sub-accountants with the new year.

But the two great departments I have to deal with are the Crown Lands and the Public Works—the one, after the customs, our principal source of revenue and the other its great consumer. As to the first, till three years ago they did not keep books on any system at all, but now they keep them by double entry and well, as far as the remains of the old system and half a dozen irresponsible Lower Canadian special funds will allow, and a villainous system they have of distinct branches of the department. If you enquire about any unintelligible entry the book keeper can only tell you it was so returned to me but Mr. Spragge or Mr. Dawson or Mr. Langevin has charge of that branch. These different branches audit or do not audit themselves and only report totals. The whole department audits or does not audit itself and used as I told you to keep a separate purse Even now they do not pay in the gross revenue and get warrants for their expenses, but they hand over only the balance after paying their expences in many cases. The consequence is that the Chief Commission may order surveys, add a new Department of Mines or what not to give a friend a berth or give a pension to a clerk's widow, not only without authority of Parliament but without consulting his brother ministers. It is checked by the new regulation but not stopped It may give you an idea how carelessly things were managed to give you an instance. In former days when land was a drug it was freely given away United Empire Loyalists and their children born and to be born were entitled to grants of land, Militia men after the war, etc., etc About fifteen years ago this was stopped, and land scrip, for £5 each, was issued to all claimants at so much an acre on their claim, as a legal tender in payment of land at its current rate. The whole country was flooded with it, it was at a great discount and for many years it almost annihilated the land revenue Now it appears upon examining the gross results that, notwithstanding much outstanding scrip, more has already been redeemed than ever was issued When scrip came in in payment it never was checked with the scrip book, much of it was never defaced in any way and none in any effectual way, and none of it destroyed. I am hunting it up from its recesses and vaults of banks where it has been deposited and forgotten for years, and I think we have it all I have commenced checking it, which will be a tedious business and require my constant supervision I find that at one time the practice was for the commissioner to sign a whole scrip book at once in blank, to the value of £10,000, and leave the clerks to fill them up afterwards. All I can say is that if I find all right they must be honester people in the Crown Lands than I ever gave them credit for Another horrible mismanagement is the Crown Land agents scattered through the Province, through whom all lands are sold and whose receipts are binding on the department. They have to make monthly returns and payments, but many of them are always in arrear Now an agent sells a quantity of land, receives the money and reports what he has done, remitting the money, or not reporting or remitting as the case may be But suppose he does report and remit but not all his sales The department knows nothing about it and has no means of knowing Clergy reserves are sold on ten years credit A man may have paid his instalments regularly though the agent may not have returned them, and it will first be found out when ten years have elapsed and he presents his ten receipts and claims his deed. Now I know some of these men to be great rogues and who shall say to what extent this has been carried I am inclined to think the whole system of local agents should be done away with, but that is none of my business I have the power to send a man to inspect their books if they have any and I think I shall do it, but I don't know that much would come of it. The great cure for the future, (but that would leave their land jobbing and favoritism untouched), would be to let them finger no cash Wherever there is a land agency there is a bank agency not far off. The purchaser should pay his money into the bank, taking duplicate bank certificates which he would give the agent, one for the Receiver General and one for the Crown Lands Department.

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* Sir Francis Hincks (1807-1885), who had been inspector-general of public accounts from 1842 to 1843 and from 1848 to 1851, and prime minister from 1851 to 1854. In 1855 he was appointed governor of Barbadoes and the Windward Islands.

The Board of Works however is the Augean stable which I most dread. Their accounts have never been audited since 1851 and then only partially. They say one whole case containing vouchers was lost on the removal of the seat of government. They have never balanced their books since 1852. They tried last year but after a month's work failed. Of the nature of their vouchers I have before spoken, and of their reluctance to let me go into arrears. Before I make up my mind about the latter I must see my way through this year. But enough of my troubles for one letter.

Yours, etc.,

JOHN LANGTON

TO HIS BROTHER, WILLIAM LANGTON

Toronto, Feb. 24th, 1856

MY DEAR WILLIAM,

Since I wrote to you last I naturally know much more of my position and the sort of work before me than I did and your answer to my former letter which I have just received induces me to go on with the same subject. I find Cayley a pleasant man to work with, upon the principle that a silent man is a most agreeable companion to a great talker. He lets me do whatever I like, and if he does not very much assist me at any rate throws no impediments in my way. I have engaged my head man Mr. Cruse, of whom I have an excellent character, but although his engagement commenced on the 17th of January I have had no personal opportunity of judging him. I was very deficient in office room at the time and I lent him to Dickenson and have never been able to get him back. In some respects this is a nuisance as I had expected him to relieve me of much of the head work, in which I get no assistance from the others and which is almost more than I can manage with sitting up to all hours in the morning. Whilst in the office I can get nothing done. During office hours I am interrupted every moment by somebody and I generally find that I do more real work in the hour and a half I stay after the clerks are gone than in all the rest of the day, but I cannot keep my share of the work up to the rest without taking work home with me. However there is some advantage in Cruse being where he is. He is hastening the closing of the public accounts, which I have to audit when made up, and he is in the meantime getting acquainted with the system in the Inspector General's office, which will be of use to us hereafter. The rest are all temporary. [One] at £300 a year is almost useless to me, but I have got him at a job at present unconnected with financial business (for I cannot trust him with figures), more of a statistical character, which with other literary portions of the business he does pretty well, though a fearful nuisance from his constant interruptions to me in telling me what he has done or consulting what he is to do. I hope to get rid of him soon. If I do, I mean to have Mr. Cambie as second clerk at £250 to keep up the general business of the office not directly connected with the auditing, of which we have a good deal, as receiving reports from various institutions, countersigning and keeping a record of the notes issued by banks under the Free Banking Act and of the securities deposited by them with the Receiver General and various other miscellaneous business which is handed over to us. Third, Mr. Greene whom I found here, very steady and constant and very accurate in figures but with very few ideas beyond figures, fourth and fifth Messrs Barber and Patterson, two young lads I brought in, both very steady and willing and Barber with some head. I am training him to abstract and analyse and draw up general statements from confused details, and he promises very well though it is no present aid to me as I have to take as much or more trouble in teaching him and checking him than would enable me to do the work myself. However it will I hope be a relief hereafter [The sixth] I mean to get rid of, and I think the five will be my permanent staff as I can always get temporary assistance, but I may have to add a sixth. My system is when any accounts come in to look cursorily over them myself first to see whether there is any peculiar feature which requires any special instructions beyond the general ones the clerks already have, and then I hand them over to one of them to audit Each clerk has a book in which he enters all the remarks he finds to make, or rather two books one of which he is working with and one which I am using When he has finished I take his book and his accounts and give him the other book and fresh work. I then go over his remarks myself, and always verify his observations before acting upon them. If he is one in whose accuracy I have confidence I generally confine myself to what he has never worked upon assuming the rest to be correct, but I often have to look over other parts, especially if large sums are concerned or there is a fault of system in the particular account, and I often find they have passed over what should have been remarked upon. On the blank side of their book I make my own observations, and when I have finished one man's account I write to him with my strictures and ask for his explanations When I have everything as far rectified as I can, I report if necessary to the Inspector General and I give the account to Mr. Barber, as corrected, to arrange and analyse if it requires it and to enter into a statement book. Many of the accounts give rise to statements and tables of another character, more in the nature of statistics, which are entered in another book, keeping the former one merely for statements of account. They are entered miscellaneously just as we make them up and are very various in their character, some of them expansions of single items in others, and relating to various periods of time. This is all I have attempted for the past and I only intend to commence my ledger from the beginning of this year. It is an improvement upon the pigeon hole system of former days where there were stowed away, people hardly knew where, piles of accounts, some accounts current without vouchers, some vouchers without accounts, some the driest of abstracts and others a mass of confused entries of which you could only say that the totals shew a certain amount received and another expended. The accounts are at any rate all together and can be referred to by an index, and they are so analysed as to show at a glance their leading features. I don't know that I could have made much more out of past transactions but for the future I mean to have a regular ledger and I think I may probably have to keep also a statement book subsidiary to it and explanatory of the separate items of which some of the ledger accounts will be composed, otherwise the ledger itself would become too bulky and confused a business. Thus the Board of Works would be an account in the ledger. But they have at present upwards of thirty different appropriations for different works, besides more than that number of kinds of expenditure not under any district appropriation but which they claim the right of spending upon under their general Act All these would form properly separate accounts in their ledger but not in mine I think, and yet one must be able to see how these stand. The Board of Works would I think be my only account, its separate works being only items in it, whilst the details of these items properly analysed would appear in the general statement book or perhaps in this case in a separate book for that department alone. I have had to open another book elucidating this same Board of Works There are existing contracts on many of the works running over several years before they are finally closed, in some cases the contractors getting advances, and at other times having a drawback kept from them, so that I cannot keep track of these contracts without opening an account for the several contractors The same remark applies to their superintendents who have frequently balances in hand and at other times seem to be out of pocket. I have therefore opened a subsidiary book for the Board of Works contractors and agents. What I may have to do of a similar character with other departments I hardly know yet I must obviously keep a record of open accounts in some way In some cases I have merely entered in the statement book the list of open balances connected with a certain account, as "Statement of the balances of the appropriations to the several grammar schools in Upper Canada for the year 1855 which remained unpaid on 1st Jan., 1856" But where the open accounts are of a more complicated character each may require to be stated separately and that would encumber the statement book and a separate book may have to be opened as for the Board of Works contractors, the abstract of which properly arranged would make a proper account for the statement book. All this makes a great deal of book keeping, but when we get rid of arrears and all square up to the current time I think we may keep it so. Hitherto as I told you before whilst they have kept a ledger for the people collecting money they have had none for those spending it, except in the case ✓ of departments of government, and then they appear to me to have got into some confusion by mixing up in one account two essentially different things—viz., the money placed at their disposal and how much has been paid to them of it, and the money which they have received and how they have expended it. I do not see my way quite clearly, but I cannot devise any way of keeping a record of these two things in one account without confusion. I think there should be two distinct ledgers, or two accounts for each accountant in one ledger, showing the state of the appropriation and the state of the expenditure; the former way would be best for the future I think, but the latter is the one I have adopted in my present statement book. This is more essentially necessary where there are other receipts besides the appropriations, and where these receipts form a leading feature of the account I question whether there should not be a separate revenue account. Thus the Board of Works would have, 1st their appropriation account, 2nd their revenue and maintenance account, if they are allowed to deduct from the revenue the expense of keeping the work up, but much better a revenue account balanced by their payments to the Receiver General, 3rdly maintenance and repairs of public works either to be paid from time to time by order in council out of the revenue or at once from the consolidated fund into which the revenue would go The revenue should not be kept as a special fund applicable to the maintenance, according to our besetting sin of special funds, but the revenue should go into the common purse and the repairs etc, out of it; whilst the revenue and the maintenance accounts would always afford the materials of a statement, which would not be a ledger account, of how much the revenue from each work exceeded or fell short of the expense of keeping it up and how these two things compared with each other on the aggregate of all the works And here would come a difficulty in deciding what was a repair and what a new work. If funds are short the Board is rather apt to shroud the non paying character of a work by getting repairs done under the guise of a new work If they are plentiful they will spend largely on improvements, without the disagreeable ordeal of the House of Assembly, by very extensive repairs out of revenue 4th Expenditure under special appropriations by Parliament and, perhaps distinct from this, 5th Expenditure of a casual and unprovided kind under Order in Council (much too large an account), and 6th Expenditure under the general powers of their Act not by Order in Council (a very much too large and ill defined account). All these things it would be very desirable to see stated separately, though I am not at all clear that they should be separate accounts in the ledger. What I do see my way the clearest in is that there should be a separate ledger for appropriations, but this is not without its difficulties. When a special sum is appropriated either in the annual estimates or in some special Act or in a general Act appropriating an annual sum, there would be no difficulty in opening an account in the ledger with each appropriation, against which the warrants would be charged as they issue; and I have pressed Cayley to introduce the rule recommended in England by the Committee on Public Accounts, but I cannot trace whether acted upon, that any balance of an appropriation unexpended after a certain time should die a natural death. Our books are encumbered with such unexpended small balances which are forgotten till it is desirable to hunt them up to cover some expenditure which will not exactly bear the light of day. When I was in Parliament I wanted to get a man paid some small sum clearly owing to him for many years but Hincks would not put it in the estimates. Richards[*] however the then Attorney General put me up to the approved method, and together we found an old appropriation before the union of the provinces on which we contrived to make my friend chargeable. I am afraid worse cases than mine have gone through the same process. This however is a digression. Then any Order in Council would have to come into the same ledger, not as a separate account for each order which would be too cumbersome, especially as it is generally immediately balanced by a warrant for the same amount, but for each service to which the orders in council were applicable. This I think would be better than entering the Orders in Council in the same account as the Parliamentary appropriations for the same service. So far I see my way clearly, the only thing wanted being that I should be furnished with a memorandum of each Order in Council authorizing the expenditure of money as it is passed. The great diffi culty is with the general Acts. There must be general Acts authorizing money to be expended for certain purposes, as the administration of justice, the exact amount of which cannot be known beforehand. In such cases it has been usual to issue warrants without any order in council. Whether such payments should not appear in the ledger at all, which would be unsatisfactory as it ought to shew all expenditure; or whether Orders in Council should not be required which would be difficult to manage, or whether I should simply balance the account for each service when I know what it comes to by an entry of "authorized by Act so and so", I have not yet determined. To require orders in council for each separate payment would be excessively inconvenient, to require an order in council for a definite amount on account to be renewed as wanted, so as to keep before the Council from time to time the state of the expenditure, would be better; but the present system at any rate appears very imperfect, for without Parliament or even the Council knowing any thing about it, it gives the Inspector General and in practice the Deputy Inspector General power to spend money of which no one can tell till long after it is spent whether it was really chargeable under the general Act. The Board of Works for instance, under its general Act, has charge of all public buildings, etc., and incurs all sorts of miscellaneous expenditure and gets warrants to meet it, without the matter ever coming up before Council. It no doubt renders an account afterwards, of which there are boxes full which have never been audited and passed, though the late Deputy Inspector General says they were all examined, which I very much doubt, and no doubt also the substance of these accounts is published annually in the printed pubhe accounts in great lump items the title of which gives very little clue to their component parts. This is my difficulty with the appropriation ledger. It is true that an appropriation book has for some years past been kept which is in fact a sort of ledger of the kind, though taking no note of orders in council and general Acts or indeed permanent Acts authorizing an annual fixed expenditure. It contains only the yearly appropriations on one side, and the warrants as they issue are entered on the other, and no balances of previous years' appropriations are carried into the new book. But if the present appropriation book were improved in this respect, still it might lead to very fallacious results unless in some way brought *en rapport* with the expenditure ledger. The two things are so far distinct that they should be kept in separate books or in separate accounts in the same book, but they are so far connected that they must be taken together to give a clear idea of how any account stands. An instance of this occurred only the other day in the case of the Superintendent of Education East.* He and his brother of the West are perfect contrasts. My Jesuitical friend Ryerson has got the genius of order and system. His accounts and vouchers are a model for all our public departments. As he has been accustomed to render them they convey the smallest amount of detailed information, but when asked for, the minutest details were forthcoming in a moment. Even when I asked for a voucher for his balance in hand I got a certificate the next morning from the cashier that £17,000 was lying to his credit in the Bank of Upper Canada in his own name and about £7,000 more in his name of office. He draws his appropriations with the most beautiful regularity, the misfortune is that he does not spend them. The man in the East on the contrary is an honest but very thick headed individual who renders his accounts in such detail that you can hardly understand them, and never touched a penny of public money in his life. He draws out cheques from time to time, as he ascertains what sums he has to pay, and every month or two when they amount to a sufficient sum he issues them and gets a warrant for the exact amount. Some time ago he overdrew his account and, as he had at the time some £30,000 unaccounted for, a clerk was sent down to overhaul his books, when it appeared that with the exception of a quantity of loose papers and the talons of the cheques there was very little in the shape of books to overhaul. The clerk got an inkling of how affairs really stood, but it was never clearly made out till I disentangled it the other day. Besides the permanent educational grant to Upper and Lower Canada we have been in the habit of granting annual[ly] an additional sum, varying from £10 000 to £25,000, and the honest man seeing this and forgetting the existence of Upper Canada thought the whole of it belonged to him and squared his expenses accordingly, believing himself to be keeping within a very wide margin indeed of his income and annually reporting an unexpended balance which we annually voted away in aid [of] building schoolhouses and supporting colleges, etc.; whereas he has been annually expending £4,000 a year beyond his income, after our deductions. This was not felt at first because the apportionment to schools for the last half of 1855 is never paid until 1856, according to their system, and some portions often not for two years, he having to wait till the parishes have made an equivalent appropriation which, the Lower Canadians not being a tax loving people, they are very slow to do. It thus happened that it was not till his overexpenditure on his appropriations exceeded a half year's income that he ever actually overdrew his account and so attracted the attention of government to the matter. It is true that in the pigeon holes lay his accounts of the sums he had paid to various parishes in driblets, payments on account of 1853 54, and 55 all mixed up together and with the funniest of vouchers, and all I have not the slightest doubt absolutely correct, but as long as he did not absolutely overdraw his account nobody perceived that he was paying his 1854 expenses with his 1855 income at the same moment that we were voting away an imaginary unexpended balance of 1854. This is a long story and I have been specially amused with it because the other day, on the very evening when I had made a report to Cayley upon the subject, I took my ladies to the House where they heard a very hot debate as to what was the proper way of spending the unexpended balance of the Lower Canada School Fund. The moral of the story is this that it is not enough to know whether a man has drawn what he is entitled to on the one hand, or whether he has spent what he has drawn on the other, but whether he has spent it for the purpose for which he was entitled to draw it.

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[*] The Hon. (afterwards Sir) William Buell Richards (1816-1889), member for Leeds in the Legislative Assembly, and attorney general in the Hincks-Morin ministry from 1851 to 1853, when he was appointed to a puisne judgeship in the Court of Common Pleas for Upper Canada.

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* The Hon. Pierre Joseph Olivier Chauveau (1820-1890) who became superintendent of education in Canada East after the session of 1854-55 succeeding Dr Jean Baptiste Meilleur (1796-1878).

You will perceive that I have only spoken in detail of two or three accounts. In fact I have only spoken of difficulties which I know, and I do not know how many more are in store for me. I have seen no Post

Office accounts, though the Postmaster General* tells me that about March he thinks I shall have the first half of last year and that it will keep me busy for a couple of months I have seen no Crown Land accounts, respecting the nature of which I am absolutely in the dark, and I have seen no Inspector General's accounts and Dickenson tells me I shall hardly do so till they are in the printer's hands

I am ashamed of the length of this letter and must try to close it in this half sheet. I am conscious I am likely to be a very obnoxious individual and I have no doubt Egerton Ryerson will hate me cordially I must bear it as best I may I will try not to become impracticable as you say, and I don't think I am very, but it is difficult sometimes to draw the line

Yours etc.,

JOHN LANGTON

TO HIS BROTHER WM. LANGTON

Toronto, April 17, 1856

MY DEAR WILLIAM,

I must give you another yarn about the public accounts, being a subject about which for want of any more agreeable one I think of all day and dream of most of the night I expected to find a mess but the reality exceeded my expectations, especially as I have only yet got into the threshold of the dirtiest stall in the Augean stable—the Board of Works I know that in that department accounts have been balanced by charges to contingencies to a great extent. I have no official knowledge of it yet and [it] may be some time

before I have, because I can't get the accounts and the utmost costiveness prevails with regard to information. The sudden death of their bookkeeper last night will no doubt be made the excuse for more delay. Probably the impossibility of getting the books balanced had something to do with it, for he died the death of Lord Mountcoffeehouse the Irish peer. With the Crown Lands I am also at present at a standstill, except that I discovered the other day forgeries of land scrip to the extent of £6,000. I know who did it pretty well but I cannot find any clue to his confederates, and if I could bring it home to him, which is perhaps doubtful, he cleared out to the States two years ago and is beyond my reach. I am at present on the scent of game in another direction, and although there is a sort of sameness in the occupation there is also variety and some excitement. I must give you two specimens, one of which you have heard of before.

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* The Hon. Robert Spence (1811 1868), postmaster-general from 1854 to 1858

We are a very wealthy people. We raise a large amount of revenue from a very moderate customs tariff and we hardly know how to spend it. I think we shall be relieved in this respect for the future because our railway speculations have provided a very efficient issue which will prevent us dying of plethora. It is astonishing how coolly we all bore the news that interest on debt to the amount of £300,000 a year which we had only guaranteed and never expected to pay is, by the repudiation of the Grand Trunk and other companies, to be met for the future by us. This however by the bye. Amongst the other consequences of our excess of revenue we always kept some half million idle in the banks. With an income of not much more than a million and a half in 1854 we never had less than £600,000 and sometimes upwards of £800,000 so lying

In 1855 the diminished imports and increased expenses had somewhat relieved this determination of blood to the banks, but still we generally had from 3 to 4 or £500,000 unemployed and the balances were duly reported to the Governor General every evening. Some of this was at three per cent. interest, subject to two or three months' notice, in various banks, but the bulk was at call in the Bank of Upper Canada which is our financial agent, and great is the outcry against this favoured institution in consequence. I had a call from the cashier the other day who complained that whilst they were supposed to have more than £200,000 in their hands they were really put to great inconvenience in their general business by being in advance to government about £50,000 and he wanted me to speak to the Inspector General about it, who he did not believe knew how things really stood. I must say I was taken aback, but I immediately commenced investigations and I found that a practice has long existed than which nothing can be worse and which renders these balances in hand sent in to the Governor General every evening so much waste paper. At the end of every month the resident engineer gives each contractor what is called a monthly estimate showing what work he has done, how much is to be kept as drawback and what he may get payment for. He takes this to the bank who give him the money. They send it to the Board of Works who after examining and checking, etc., issue a certificate to the bank. This certificate they send to the Council office who at their leisure prepare a warrant which is sent to the Inspector General, and it is not till he signs the warrant that he knows anything about it. In the ordinary course it is at least a month after the money has been paid before it comes into the public accounts and if a particular expenditure is of a nature which it is not desired to make known, especially whilst Parliament is in session or the public accounts are being made up for the year, there is nothing more easy than to keep it back a little in some of its numerous stages After the warrant does come in it may be found all wrong, paid once before, unauthorized, etc., of all of which there are instances now in the office. Delay occurs in consequence and the disagreeable item does not appear in the published accounts, but the money is nevertheless really spent and irrecoverable. The bank advances to the Board of Works at this present moment are something like £100,000.

Then there is the Post Office It is not a paying concern with us but a constant source of expense, as we have innumerable post offices scattered over the country the receipts from which do not pay a fiftieth part of the cost of conveying the mail. I don't object to that if we knew what it cost us, but we do not Last session £20,000 was voted to cover the deficiencies of 1854 and 55, at which time we had the Postmaster General's report that the deficiency for 1854 was £7,000 odd I question very much if three members in the House knew (I did not) that the Postmaster General's financial year ends on the 31st of March and that when he told us in May, 1855 that he was deficient £7,000 for 1854 he meant up to March, 1854 What he was deficient up to March, 1855, two months after the year was over, he knew no more than we did; but he supposed the other £13,000 would cover it. There is the greatest trouble in getting returns from postmasters, whose emoluments are so small that you have no hold upon them on that score, and I have up to the present time only got the accounts to June of last year, and not three weeks ago the end of the year ending March 31, 1855 Up to that time I now know that the deficiency was £29,000, to meet which there was only £13,000; and since then a whole year has elapsed, with the expenses of carrying the mail daily increasing both from the general rise of everything and the increased number of non paying offices. The Postmaster General has not the smallest idea what the deficiency will be in the year just past, but the bank which has been finding the ways and means all the time has a very good idea, it is £57,000 These are goodly sums to be expended, not only without sanction of Parliament but without the consent or even knowledge of the finance minister

The Crown Lands also have a good pull at purse, and there is another case of which I had some cognizance which illustrates the impropriety of this system. Last year we had a new Militia Bill in consequence of your taking away all our soldiers, but Parliament with the jealousy which always characterizes popular assemblies grumbled at the bill and especially the expense and put in a clause saying that the payment must depend upon an annual vote of Parliament and the Ministry very glad to escape from an unpopular measure accepted the clause and said that as they did not intend to organize they would not ask for a vote that year. Nevertheless they did partially organize, and the pay lists came in to me for audit, or rather the Deputy Inspector General asked me before payment what was to be done I pointed out that it was not only an unprovided expense, but that the Act positively prohibited any thing being paid till a vote had been taken So they privately instructed the bank to make an advance.

You can now understand how our apparent balances dwindle away. I have declared open war against the system and Cayley gives me a lukewarm support, but he is too timid a hand for any efficient reform. The Board of Works declare reform impossible, the Postmaster General declares it impossible, and the only warm support I get is from the bank and from the Receiver General who being the cash keeper has a commendable objection to allow any extraneous fingers to get into his purse. Nevertheless I will conquer. There is a Committee of the House on Public Accounts the chairman * of which is a fine upright fellow, a wealthy merchant and a great friend of mine. I have told him all about it and, although a leader of opposition, he has agreed that I am to do my best to get the Ministry to make the reform, and if I can't do that then we will bring it out before the Committee. It is a very difficult position for me. I don't like anything that can be construed into treachery to the men in office but I can't conceal anything I know to be so grievously wrong. John Young the aforesaid chairman sent for me and told me that he believed both of us mainly desired, politics apart, to put the financial business on a proper footing. That he felt in entire ignorance of the nature of the business in the financial offices and did not know where to begin. He said that he would put me such general questions as would enable me to tell where was a field for research, and he did. I might to be sure have answered them truly and yet have left him in the dark, but although it looked like volunteering information

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* John Young (1811-1878), a prominent merchant of Montreal, who had been elected member of the Legislative Assembly for Montreal City in November 1851. He had been commissioner of public works in the Hincks-Morin government from October 1851 to September, 1852.

I thought it the better course to be very open. In a private conversation I told him afterwards a great deal more, upon which he agreed to leave me to work by myself first and if that failed he will back me. It is their own fault making it a dependent office. I should have had the power of independent reporting and I always told them so, and they knew that I would not assist to conceal anything. Nevertheless I was not easy in my mind so I told John Macdonald what I had done the other day and he acknowledged that I was right. It will end in giving me the power of independent reporting, but I should not be surprised if there was a row first. I may also mention that the bank being desirous of making a poor mouth, as the saying is, overstated the case and, if closely enquired into, I do not think they are really in advance to Government at all. The advances to contractors in strictness are and certainly ought to be pure banking transactions. I have little doubt that the bank get a discount on their advance when it would clearly not be government they were paying. It is a business which any bank would be glad to get for the security is good, and the presumptive evidence that the contractor is entitled to draw much clearer than in most cases where a bank discounts a draft, besides it is exactly the sort of business they like, for their notes are paid away to labourers and small tradesmen and are much longer in coming back upon them than if they assisted a merchant to make a large payment. Moreover £11,000 of the post office advance appears to be money not really paid but credits given to money order post offices, so that that sum is really never out of their hands though fluctuating about amongst their different branches and agencies. Then all public accountants keep their

money in the bank, or ought to do, and the £23,000 which Ryerson holds, though paid by the bank to Government, is still really in their hands. This does not however affect the main question I have to deal with.

The second subject is the old story of Ryerson. I took occasion to ask at the bank whether they allowed him interest and they do at three per cent. and I got a statement of the amounts so paid him since 1851; when therefore the Dr. returned from England the day before yesterday he found a pleasant note from me calling upon him to account for nearly £1,600 had and received for the public uses of the province, not a very pleasant reception for a man of such intense respectability I have no answer as yet but I have no doubt, from his great efficiency as school superintendent and the great power of the Methodist connection, I shall be accused of a conspiracy to upset our school system, etc, etc. The great father of lies himself is not up to more cunning dodges than my reverend friend, and the way in which he has kept his account was evidently intended to meet the possibility of such a charge It has been under several different names, sometimes two or three at once and balances transferred from one to the other, but all of them under some official designation as Superintendent of Education, Legislative School Grant Board of Education, etc. This at once removes any doubts as to the interest being public money, and he will not I think attempt to deny it, but triumphantly point to the title of the account to shew that he never intended it to be otherwise How he will explain why he never rendered any account of these sums being in his hands is another thing, but from long acquaintance with the man I have no doubt he has an answer ready. What makes it susceptible of being construed into part of an attack upon the school system is a further complication which I will try to explain When they were making out the annual accounts, the education fund being in great confusion I made out a statement and got them to close the books accordingly, showing a balance overdrawn by Lower Canada of £5,825 and a balance still available for Upper Canada of £300 odd, relying altogether upon the balances January 1st, 1855, being correct When I got the proof sheets of the Public Accounts, which I had never seen until then I found a payment for increased salaries, which I had never heard of before, charged to Consolidated Revenue whereas by the Order in Council it was to be charged to Education Fund, which brought out a balance against Upper Canada of £179 13 4, which I got accordingly altered; and as I was then drawing up a statement for the House of Assembly, I based it upon this second rectification of the school account. I may say by the way that I purposely drew up the statement in such a way as to shew that Lower Canada had been constantly overdrawing and Upper Canada underexpending, and it does not say much for our financiers that nobody perceived it. The only remark upon Ryerson's balances was an attack upon Government from Mackenzie for making Ryerson draw these sums to deposit in the pet bank, as if it was any advantage to them to pay him interest instead of paying Government none. As for Lower Canada, both Ministers and the Opposition are firmly and unalterably persuaded that there are large unexpended balances, and in spite of my statement and numerous further details which I have given individual members they have just passed a new school Act, which proceeds upon the assumption of about £6 000 a year unclaimed balances whilst the superintendent has really been overexpending about £2,000 a year. There used to be large unclaimed balances, but schools have been more popular in Lower Canada of late and the real object of the Bill is to starve the common schools in order to build up the higher class of educational institutions which are under the control of the priests. Cartier, the Minister who introduced the bill, can plead no ignorance and did not deny his knowledge of the truth to me and scarcely denied his object, so the question having become one of policy and not of accounts is removed from my jurisdiction. He said in so many words that it sounded better to call them unclaimed balances, but whether unclaimed or not he had provided that the money should come out of the common school fund. Honest that at any rate. However to return to Egerton Ryerson. If the House took no notice of my statement Mr. Hodgins the Deputy Superintendent of Education did. . . . Mr Hodgins wrote me a very indignant letter for saying that they were £179 overdrawn and showing that the error arose from my giving them credit for the half only of an additional grant of £25,000 in 1855 instead of their share according to population, the principle followed in dividing the original £50,000 a year, and which had been followed with respect to additional grants also since 1853 when they first commenced. Now I had before me when I made the statement Ryerson's application for the larger share and the report thereon of the Inspector General and Deputy Inspector General both saying that former additional grants had been equally divided, and the Order in Council affirming the same fact (orders in council should not affirm facts), and deciding that the same course must continue to be followed. This was enough for me, but Mr. Hodgins' letter induced me to go back and I found the astounding fact that, although £10,000 had been so granted in 1853 and paid, there was not in any book in the Inspector General's Department or in the published public accounts the faintest record of how much of it had been paid to Dr. Ryerson and how much to Dr. Meilleur.* It is true that I found another £5,000 which had nothing to do with the matter but which had apparently from an erroneous reference in the margin been taken for Dr. Meilleur's half of the £10,000, but the history of the £10,000 itself was a blank. I had therefore to look to the accounts of the superintendents themselves and I found that Ryerson had accounted for his division of the larger share and Dr. Meilleur for his of the smaller, so that Hodgins was right in point of fact and the Order in Council wrong. I satisfied myself that the Hincks government had intended the £10,000 to be a regular annual addition to the grant, to be divided like the rest, and upon the strength of this Ryerson had prepared and Hincks had carried an amended school Act providing for the manner in which it was to be expended (it has not by the bye been so expended in any one particular). In my researches, however, I came upon another astounding fact, that Ryerson according to his custom of drawing in advance had again received his share early in 1854, apparently under his Act although that did not grant the money but only showed how what might be granted should be expended; and when the new Government made the additional grant for 1854 £15,000 instead of £10,000, he also claimed and got his share of the £15,000 under the estimates. As for the Lower Canada man, his accounts had got into such hopeless confusion that a clerk was sent down who commencing at 1848 reconstructed them and gave him credit for his half of the three additional grants of 1853, 4, and 5. I had therefore to correct my statement a third time showing that, on the supposition of an equal division, whilst Lower Canada had overdrawn £5,525, Upper Canada had overdrawn £5,631, and the two sums were so near each other that I recommended taking a sponge to the whole transaction and starting afresh. This was I think not an unreasonable proposition but it brought down upon me Mr. Hodgins again, with greater indignation than before, with a statement beginning in 1846 showing that he had only overdrawn £2,400 odd It is true that a couple of days after he asked to withdraw the statement and put in a new one acknowledging to £4,690, but it is curious that an acute man should not have perceived that all this was not *instead of* but *in addition to* the sum I had named. I in the meantime went back to 1846 also and, lest I might have to make a fifth correction, I satisfied myself that in 1844 and 45 he had just got his appropriation and indeed 11d short of it so I think I have got a firm foothold at last, and I make him £12,900 overdrawn. This balance may be thus analysed in round numbers, £4,700 which he acknowledges to be really overdrawn, £6,200 which he acknowledges to have received but claims a right to, and £2,000 which the Public Accounts show were paid him but he does not charge himself with. I therefore have called upon Ryerson to account for this also and shall send a clerk to examine the books Irrespective of the Dr however, what are we to do with the accounts as between Upper and Lower Canada? We may take a sponge to the whole thing and begin again, which would be the best thing, but I doubt whether Lower Canada will stand our having received £7,000 more than they. Or we may make both pay up, or make Upper Canada pay the difference or Lower Canada receive the difference, or make Upper Canada pay to Lower Canada half the difference. Any of the last methods would be very unpopular in Upper Canada, for we are very proud and justly proud of our schools upon which besides the government grant we spend nearly £300,000 a year from municipal taxation, and parting with any of Ryerson's balances, especially to Lower Canada, would go very much against the grain. We shall not grumble at Ryerson grasping more than his due for so good a purpose and as no doubt this year the savings will be largely poured out the schools will be more popular than ever. I have no doubt that Ryerson will mix up the two things and lose sight of his own irregularity in defending his school fund from the plunder which I instigate, and it is not consolatory to think that the public, when it comes before them, not having the fear of arithmetic before their eyes will care nothing for my figures, but only think of protecting the Upper Canada school moneys from diminution or object to any additional grant to Lower Canada to go into the hands of the priests, a feeling in which I most cordially participate. I should not be at all surprised if Ryerson comes out of the contest with flying colours, and honoured as a great public benefactor. He is undoubtedly a very clever fellow and a very deep one. For years past he has worked the schools till he has centered all power in himself, each new bill lopping off some of the municipal or other extraneous control, and he has latterly made a great push to get the colleges and university under his thumb. He has a journal of education as his organ, carried on at the cost of the province and distributed to every school section, which is a powerful engine—and last not least he is the Pope of Methodism. Cayley is terribly afraid of him and leaves me to fight him alone, Ridout of the bank is in mortal terror lest his revelations should get him into trouble, even our Chancellor * who is one of the most opinionative and overbearing men I know, who rules the Court of Chancery with a rod of iron and has converted the two Vice Chancellors into lay figures, who bullies the Senate of the University, is visibly cowed in the presence of Ryerson. He is surrounded as by an atmosphere with such a concentrated essence of respectability, and meets all opposition with such a calm unruffled air of conscious superiority that I will not deny that I am half afraid of him myself. I have had several spats with the Chancellor and he does not bully me as he does the rest, and if he does a little sometimes I submit to it because he really is a first rate man and a strong hand at the helm is much wanted. I had also a spat with Ryerson once to whom I gave a very much deserved lecture which he bore with the air of a martyr prepared to endure even more than that in a just cause, and when I had done and silence prevailed in the Senate I felt astonished at myself that I should have assailed such self sustained virtue. I would rather meet the Chancellor any day and as for the Board of Works it will be a flea bite in comparison.

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* See note p. 239

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*The Hon. William Hume Blake (1809-1870), chancellor of Upper Canada (1850-62) and chancellor of the University of Toronto (1853-56)

So much for public accounts, however you will be glad to hear that I have got a first rate man in Mr. Cruse. Neat, and accurate, rather precise and deliberate, as becomes a bookkeeper, but not slow, and above all with a head to devise something new as well as to carry out what is established. He is already beginning to save me a great deal of trouble. I think after all it was my best course not to have a chief clerk at all until I had so far seen my way as to know what I intended to do. I have opened a ledger into which all public expenditure of every kind will enter under the heading of the different services for which it is paid including also, to complete the system of double entry, the authorities for paying. There is nothing similar to this kept in any office. The ledger in the Inspector General's Department is kept under the heading of the authorities, the services being lumped up and no special funds come into it, being kept in a separate book. I do not know how they manage it. I cannot see my way clearly on that system. On my own I do. The great difficulty I anticipated I have got removed viz. getting the requisite data. They have commenced now sending me the orders in Council regularly, and I have arranged to have the duplicate warrants filed in my office, so that I have a complete record both of authorities and payments.

The Ministry are in a most contemptible state of confusion. The Ministry themselves and the party supporting them want Sir Allan* to resign and he who is ill in bed won't. They dare not, for that would leave him in, and there is no knowing what advice he might give the Governor General. John Ross[*] resigned yesterday on Grand Trunk questions and a Hincksite (a very good fellow) succeeds him. I think there is no doubt Sir Allan must go, and I think Cayley also. John A Macdonald is now the recognized leader, but he is anything but strong in reality There is a talk of bringing Robert Baldwin[†] into Parliament again, in which case a strong ministry might be formed without Macdonald, but at present apparently he must be the nucleus. There is a sad deficiency of available men. The parties are so split up that no man can tell what will come next. The present ministry is at any rate only a temporary evil.

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* Sir Allan Napier MacNab (1798-1862), president of the council and prime minister since 1854. He resigned his office in May, 1856.

Yours etc,

JOHN LANGTON

TO HIS BROTHER, WM LANGTON

Toronto, May 24th, 1856

MY DEAR WILLIAM,

We have had a very stirring time of it in the political world of late and my ladies have got so much interested in it that they generally go to the house every night to hear the debates The whole of this session has been a state of chronic crisis for the ministry, though there are of course fits of the disease which look as if they were really going to lead to some change. There have been no less than five want of confidence votes during the session, in which the ministry has come off victorious, but only to be exposed to the same thing the next week. The last has been the most serious as the agony has lasted nearly a fortnight The debate lasted Wednesday, Thursday and Friday and, as Saturday is always a holiday, every one expected that it would end that night, but for some reason or other the ministry themselves were evidently anxious to postpone the decision and the debate was adjourned again to Monday On Monday night however the eastern steamer did not come in from bad weather, and as several opposition members were on board who had been home for the Sunday it was the opposition this time which wanted delay I sat up till four a.m. when I left them in hot debate and found them at it still when I returned soon after nine in the morning At noon the missing men arrived and one would have thought that they had enough of it, however they kept it up till past midnight again, when the vote was taken with a majority of twenty three for ministers But the Upper Canada vote was six against them, and of the absent five, two were opposition men, two were with great difficulty persuaded by ministers to keep out of the House, and Sir Allan himself was the fifth. This from our peculiar position led to a farther complication. It has always been a doubtful question whether the ministry are bound to have a double majority Most men repudiate the doctrine and yet it is frequently acted upon, and as long as our present system continues of a ministry half Upper and half Lower Canadian it is impossible entirely to ignore the sectional majorities. In the present instance it is more particularly compli cated because it is a coalition ministry, two of the Upper Canada section being Reformers* and three Conservatives,† and all the reform supporters have deserted them but four. In fact there is no doubt that the ministry as a whole has lost the confidence of the House and country although it may not suit people's books to turn them out just yet. It did not therefore create surprise, when the House met on Wednesday, that none of the ministry were in their places and that the Solicitor General‡ moved the adjournment till Friday. It is pretty well known that all the Upper Canadians except Sir Allan tendered their resignation but Sir Edmund would not acknowledge the double majority principle and refused to accept it on that ground and Sir Allan on the same ground would not tender his. Upon this the whole ministry Upper and Lower resigned except Sir Allan who said His Excellency might fill up his place but he would not give even a colour to the doctrine by voluntarily giving up. Now comes the most curious part of the business. Sir Edmund entrusted Colonel Taché, the senior French member of the old cabinet, with the formation of a new ministry. He called in J. A. MacDonald, and between them they re-established exactly the old ministry except Sir Allan. The thing was really most absurd. The country has certainly no confidence in Sir Allan who is looked upon as the embodiment of Upper Canada Toryism but to replace him as Premier by Col. Taché, who is the essence of Lower Canada Toryism, would certainly not win back many of their Upper Canada friends, especially as what had shaken the Upper Canada Liberals lately was the abandonment of everything to the Quebec-Priest-Tory section of Lower Canada whom Col. Taché represents. Individually Sir Allan has done no harm this session as he has been confined to his bed with the gout since the second week If therefore the old ministry come back to face the same majority against them it must only be that they have abandoned their double majority ground on which they resigned, after getting rid of the only man amongst them who held the same constitutional doctrine which they now are prepared to hold On Friday * the old man, who is pluck to the backbone, was carried into the House in his chair to meet his enemies and his friends and he was enthusiastically received; but the rest were not visible, and the Solicitor General again moved an adjournment till Monday Sir Allan spoke sitting, but in their absence would not make his full statement. Since then (for the House spoke out very plainly its opinion upon the subject and several new defections were announced) it is rumoured that the more prudent of the ministry will not keep office, and it is doubtful whether even on Monday they will be ready to announce themselves

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[*] The Hon. John Ross (1818-1871), a follower of the Hon. Robert Baldwin, appointed a legislative councillor in December, 1848. He had been speaker of the Legislative Council in the Conservative ministries of 1854 and 1855 but he resigned the office on April 18, 1856 He was succeeded by Colonel Taché, who continued for a time to hold the office of receiver-general. In April, 1856, the Hon. Joseph Curran Morrison (1816-1885) was brought into the Cabinet without a portfolio In May 1856, he became receiver general

[†] The Hon Robert Baldwin (1804-1858), prime minister of Canada from 1842 to 1844 and from 1848 to 1851.

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* Spence and Morrison.

† Macdonald, Cayley and the Hon. P. M. Vankoughnet (1822-1869), president of the council and minister of agriculture.

‡ The Hon. (afterwards Sir) Henry Smith (1812-1868), solicitor-general for Upper Canada.

What has made these debates the more interesting to us is that I have been lugged into them. I told you that I had given evidence before the Committee on Public Accounts which would beget a row, and the committee very cunningly contrived to present their report the day the want of confidence vote came on It and the evidence were not printed when the debate was going on, but the report was read, and it and the newspapers made a great deal more of my evidence

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* May 23, 1856

than it amounted to The committee and the papers founded charges on my evidence against the ministry some of which were true enough, though the system established long before their day and not themselves was in fault, and others which were really not warranted by the facts The impression however left on the House and country is that I made the charges. Now of the three departments implicated the Postmaster General made the best defence he could without naming me, the Board of Works, the worst of the lot, was very polite, but the Crown Lands defended themselves by attacking me. Cauchon, who certainly has mistaken the spelling of his name, read in Parliament three papers prepared by his subordinates, declaring my statements in the evidence to be entirely false and charging me with neglecting my duty and never having audited their accounts at all Now the facts are these On the 28th of February I wrote to him with my remarks upon his accounts It was a long letter but I will only mention three points which were made the foundation of the attack. (1) In his account with the Receiver General he professes to have an unapplied balance of £10,000 odd of which no notice was taken in the accounts sent to me, and this £10,000, which I heard of from the Receiver General, does not at all correspond with their books In my letter I asked for an explanation of this which I could not understand. (2) In the Woods and Forests account there is an account of expenditure to the extent of £9,000 entirely without vouchers, which I mentioned to him almost in the words I have used to you. (There were however many similar things remarked upon for of a total expenditure of £58 000 there were no vouchers sent to me for £17,000 and insufficient ones for £25,000) (3) He had paid in to the Receiver General or professed to have paid in £5,000 odd which he had never collected. To this letter I got no reply till April 24th, and from that day to this nothing more than that brief letter of half a page. When asked by the committee whether I had any remarks to make upon the Crown Lands account, I gave them a copy of this letter, so that if it contains a charge, the charge was at any rate made to the commissioner himself. In his speech he said that he had not considered my letter of any particular importance and that it had been altogether overlooked, and it appears that the man at the head of the Woods and Forests had never even heard of it till the committee reported. He then charges me with neglecting my duty because I had never come to his office to examine his books, etc., and says that my charge that there was an expenditure of £9,000 without vouchers is without the least foundation in fact, in proof of which he brought a wheelbarrow full of papers into the House. Moreover he, who has made himself ridiculous by converting his office into a convent and not allowing his clerks to speak to any one except in his presence or that of his secretary, permits them to send these documents to the papers, altered in essential particulars from what he read in the House, and to publish letters making further charges against me. I have had a little private correspondence with him, arising from my asking for copies of these documents which he at first would not give me. Its tone has not been very friendly, but it is not to him or in the papers that I will defend myself; my defence shall be made in the House where the charges were made. My first step was to write two official letters to Cayley, the one short stating that my duties as auditor were to ask for all necessary information and audit accounts in my own office which a Minister of the Crown who is responsible to the House alone may give or withhold as he pleases on his own responsibility, and showing that I had asked for the information and had not got it. The second entered into details of the particular items which had been the subject of debate, in order that he might be posted up The first letter was intended to be read in the House, and in it I told him plainly that I wrote it in order that he might defend me I showed them both to Macdonald who approved of what I had done Cayley after receiving the letters spoke to me about them and professed to be very indignant at Cauchon, nevertheless he never opened his mouth in the House upon the subject. Macdonald it is true spoke of me in terms of warm personal friendship and told the House that I had only accepted office upon the distinct pledge that I should be quite unfettered in the matter of auditing, but it was not his place to defend me against Cauchon and other Frenchmen who followed in his wake, as he could know nothing of the particulars It was Cayley's place, and as soon as the debate was over I wrote another official letter to him telling him so and asking that he should either do so or intimate to me that my conduct did not admit of defence I also reminded him that I had pointed out to him as certain to occur exactly what had happened, that if the auditor remained in his present position the Inspector General would at every moment be obliged either to disown his own officer for doing his duty or come into collision with his colleagues. That as making the office independent had not met with his approbation the only other escape from the dif-

ficulty was to hold no communication with Members of the Executive except through him and asking for his instructions how I was to conduct the business of the office. (My present intention is to audit the accounts and make such remarks and applications for further information as may be required and send them upstairs to Cayley to sign.) He cannot avoid giving me an answer to this letter, and if he will not undertake my defence in the House I will get a private friend to move for copies of my letters. I am sure I shall be supported in the House, and I am not sorry that the contest has come on as it has. It will perhaps result in making the office what it ought to be and that sooner or later will bring an increase of salary, perhaps it may leave things as they are, and perhaps it may result in my getting an intimation to resign. The three chances are about even, but I have put a bold front on it hitherto and I will fight it out manfully. I know that all the Frenchmen in the ministry without exception are very indignant at me. There are only two members of the ministry that I can really depend upon much, and I know too much of politicians to rely very much upon them if it would inconvenience their own position. Between ourselves my principal dependence is their fears. There is not a man in Canada, except Hincks, that they would be less inclined to see in Parliament than myself, and I have had a few peeps behind the scenes which would enable me to take up a most formidable position against them. However whilst I talk of the ministry it is doubtful whether we have a ministry, and who my chief may be the day after tomorrow I will not undertake to pronounce.

Whilst these exciting times have been in progress there has been a little underplot going on which came

to its crisis on Thursday and has resulted in an addition of £200 a year to my income, at least an addition to that extent for two years, and that without any material addition to my work and responsibility. Dr McCaul [*] the President of University College——was our Vice Chancellor. When the time for election came on I was asked to allow myself to be proposed. I consented provided I was not to have any personal canvassing to do and I never spoke to one of the Senate except the man who proposed me, but there was plenty of canvassing and political and all sorts of other influence used to bring people up or keep them away. The result was that almost everybody stayed away and I got four votes and he two. The Chancellor is evidently very indignant, which cannot be helped, but on the other hand the Professors are delighted. No doubt I shall have some extra work, but as the Chancellor, Vice Chancellor and I used to do all the work before, it won't make any very great difference and £400 is not to be despised.

I forget whether I told you the result of Dr Ryerson's affair. Three or four days after his return home he called and entered into a long discussion about his accounts generally, and trying to make all sorts of reasons for his large balances and throwing the blame upon the Government and everybody but himself and after a two hours conference he put on his hat to go away, and at the door it seemed suddenly to strike him that he had forgotten to speak about the interest. He said that £900 of it was credited in his books to the

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[*] The Rev John McCaul (1807-1886), successively president of King's College, the University of Toronto and University College, Toronto (1853-80). See J King *McCaul, Croft, Forneri* (Toronto, 1914).

Normal school, although he did not give any explanation how it came that he had made no mention of it in the accounts rendered to me. As to the rest he said he thought he had a right to it, and said he had once spoken to Hincks about it, etc., etc., but if I thought it right he would refund it.[*] I said very little in reply and don't mean to say any more, but when he next squares his accounts with me he will find his balance in hand increased accordingly. We are very gracious and I was told that he was very anxious that I should be proposed as Vice Chancellor, but he forgot to come and vote for me.

I am in some doubt whether to send this letter by mail tomorrow or keep it for another week, so as to give the conclusion of the crisis. I think however that anything we may hear during next week will only be the beginning of another crisis so I will not postpone this letter.

Yours, etc.,

JOHN LANGTON

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[*] Dr. Ryerson's treatment of his balances as a source of private profit had some warrant in English tradition. It is true that the tradition had been abandoned in England for some hundred years, but tradition dies hard, especially at a distance from the centre of reform. Lecky in his History of England in the Eighteenth Century, vol. II., p. 472, (London 1878) says —

"On his [sc. Pitt's] appointment as Paymaster of the Forces in 1746, he at once and for ever established his character by two striking instances of magnanimity. His predecessors had long been accustomed to invest in government securities the large floating balance which was left in their hands for the payment of the troops and to appropriate the interest, [and also to receive as a perquisite of office one half per cent. of all subsidies voted by Parliament to foreign princes]. These [two] sources of emolument being united to the regular salary of the office, made it in time of war extremely lucrative, and though they had never been legalized they were universally recognized, and had been received without question and without opposition by a long line of distinguished statesmen."—*W. A. L.*

To his Brother, Wm. Langton

November 9th, 1856

My dear William,

The last letter to you I think left me in the midst of a very pretty quarrel with the Crown Lands Department, which is now happily brought to a close. Having done all I could in the matter I left things to take their chance, throwing the responsibility upon my superiors. From time to time things came in to be audited, upon which occasions I took the opportunity of reporting that I had no materials for an efficient audit, and having put that on record I troubled myself no more about it. But by degrees the materials became more plentiful and the last batch of accounts were so satisfactory all proper vouchers being there, and almost all my suggestions of improvements in the manner of keeping and rendering being adopted, and my remarks upon them were so promptly replied to, that I thought I might go and call at the office personally, which I was the more anxious to do because I had some business of my own there, touching a timber license worth more than a hundred pounds, in which I was completely at the mercy of the commissioner, or rather his chief clerk of the Woods and Forests who was the individual who was at the bottom of all my differences with the department. We had a very amicable talk over matters of account, and when I introduced my own affairs the clerk was sent for and ordered to prepare my license. Since then most of the former deficiencies have been by degrees sent in, and further suggestions of reforms have been acceded to, so that I may consider that department as fairly brought to a satisfactory state as far as auditing is concerned. The subs are evidently very glum, but the result is altogether satisfactory enough. The old quarrel may therefore be considered almost amongst the things that were, and therefore the papers relating to it which I send you have lost part of their interest, nevertheless I send them.

In the meantime I have been constantly at Cayley✓ about other reforms, sometimes verbally and sometimes by written reports, but he is altogether impracticable and immoveable. He can see nothing but difficulties, and if he does agree with you he is afraid of doing anything for fear of offending somebody. Latterly I have given up attempting to make anything of him and do not see him for weeks together. Whenever I have cause to recommend any change or to remark upon anything wrong I put on record a written report, but I never allude to the subject verbally unless he begins it, and never expect (and therefore am not disappointed) any action on his part. Being determined however that I would clear myself from any imputation of negligence I determined to put my representations in a more formal shape, and therefore prepared about half a dozen memoranda in which I entered into detail upon a great many subjects where some action is required, which I submitted to the Board of Audit and had them recorded on our minutes and got the Board to assent to a minute embracing the heads of the memoranda. This with the memoranda themselves I sent to Cayley, and took care that the other ministers should know of its existence. That is nearly two months ago and I never have had the smallest conversation with Cayley upon the subject, but I saw the document lying on the Governor General's table the other day and I can perceive the minute bearing fruit.

Whilst the Crown Lands, where there is really nothing very wrong except a most complicated and inefficient system of account-keeping which they have inherited from bygone days, kicked up a great fuss about my very inoffensive remarks, the Board of Works, where everything is wrong and corruption of the grossest kind prevails, treated me with the greatest suavity but offered a most effectual passive resistance to an audit. I used to remonstrate about once a fortnight in a letter to Cayley, which no doubt went into the pigeon hole; but the Board of Works ignored the existence of the Audit Office. At last I wrote him a letter, enumerating all the letters I had at different times written to him and to the Board of Works, and saying that I could do no more and should await his instructions for the future. I took it to him when I knew Joe Morrison[*] was with him, and so the question was discussed, subsequently brought before Council, and they valiantly resolved that if the accounts were not sent in they would dismiss the book keeper. Now the chief commissioner is a very polite Frenchman who knows and cares nothing about public works or accounts but has the task assigned to him in the present ministry of keeping in good humour the Quebec section of the Lower Canadians, besides some private interest in feeding a certain Baby, a great contractor, through whose hands from £100,000 to £200,000 of public money pass annually and of whom I have always observed that wherever his name appears the only vouchers I can find are that he got the money (which I can very well believe), but as to whether justly or not the documents are almost silent. Then there is the Assistant Commissioner or non political head—a jolly fellow brought out by Lord Sydenham. . And thirdly there is the Secretary who physiognomically bears a great resemblance to a cat shamming to be asleep, and his actions do not belie his face. Lemieux receives you with the greatest suavity (and he really is a very pleasant man) he assents to the justness of everything you say, but he does not profess to know anything about details and refers you to Killaly. Killaly is also a most agreeable man, he is quite shocked at the irregularity in the department but he is only an engineer, he never meddles with anything else, he knows no more about accounts than he does of politics and refers you to Mr. Begley. Mr. Begley is not an agreeable man, his situation is a very unpleasant one, he is only a servant, he writes letters as he is instructed, and if he is instructed to send accounts he will do so, but he is only a servant and you must speak to Mr. Lemieux or Killaly. So they wisely determined to dismiss the book-keeper who came into office about six months ago and inherited books which they never tried to balance for a great many years and naturally have failed to accomplish now. But the book keeper fortunately can show that the accounts for the quarter ending 30th April were made out several months ago, but Mr. Begley told him not to send them till further orders. This occurred about a month ago, nevertheless I did not get that quarter's accounts till yesterday and from a cursory glance I can see that they are very incomplete. It is pretty clear that we must have a fight before long and I am preparing for it.

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[*] *Supra*, note page 257.

In other respects I get along pretty well. The only other fight which I told you of, with Dr. Ryerson, has ended in a truce. I have done my duty in reporting the malversation, and at the end of each quarter in reporting on his accounts I call his attention to the £1,800 I have charged him with for interest received, to which in his reply he alludes in some such sentence as this, "The remaining observations will form the subject of another communication," which never comes. I am also industriously reducing his balance by refusing his applications for more money, against which he loudly remonstrates. John Macdonald acknowledged that they ought to dismiss him but they dare not. I should be sorry for that for he is an useful man, but I think their courage might extend to making him disgorge.* Perhaps, when Parliament meets, of two dangers they may choose the least. In other respects we get along smoothly enough. A man who is willing to work generally gets plenty to do, and they have commenced referring all sorts of things to me which do not strictly belong to my department. Amongst other things they have gradually got into the way of sending down applications for warrants to me for report, which Cayley always objected to at first. I think it is more correct that I should report whether a payment is authorized before it is made than afterwards, but there are difficulties. An order in council must necessarily be authority enough for me and precludes my enquiring whether the order in council is founded on just grounds, but if I report upon a claim for money it is evidently not very easy for them to pass an order contrary to my report. Sometimes too an application is referred to me after the order in council has passed, when I have to interpret it; no very easy thing sometimes. In both these cases it occasionally happens that my report is not what they want it to be altogether, and it comes back to me with an unofficial intimation that they want the report altered. It is treading on ticklish ground sometimes. I have modified the report sometimes and I have refused to alter it, but I generally get out of the difficulty by submitting to Council whether it should be so or so, or submitting whether they meant so or so, and in almost all these cases I have found that they decide according to my original report. It is one thing to do a questionable act at once without explanation and another to decide between two courses pointed out to you.

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* This did occur in 1858, according to the *Globe's* review of the Ryerson case in the issue of January 28, 1859 (daily). Other references to the case may be found in the *Globe*, in the weekly editions of May 28, June 4, and June 11, 1858, and in the daily editions of March 9 and March 22, 1859, and February 22, 1860.

I have been thinking of striking for wages. I have raised the salary of all my clerks I engaged Mr. Cruse at £300 but I am so much pleased with him that in June I raised him to £350 and the other day (that being the limit of my authority), recommended him for £400 I think I am worth £750

My next great trouble is the University. When I was made Vice Chancellor I considered the estery as✓ clear gain, and it is pretty nearly so because I should have worked nearly as hard for nothing But one way or another it takes up nearly half my time and brings me somewhat unpleasantly into collision with people with whom I don't want to collide We are acting under a most iniquitous law by which Government constituted itself the guardian of the University, and they administer our funds and property without the slightest regard to the interests of their ward. It is a little fund, no *little* fund indeed, of which Parliament knows nothing and which has nothing to do with the provincial revenue. Just at this present moment they are improving some property of Cayley's mother in law with our money, and I am going to write to-night a formal remonstrance upon the subject to His Excellency as visitor. He sees the evil and keeps saying that we must be made independent of governments, but he himself is always interfering in the paltriest details. It was only yesterday, because the Senate would not get him out of a scrape which he got into by interfering beyond his province, that he was so cross and snappish with me that in anybody but a Governor General it would have been called ungentlemanly. However I must put off the University to another time.

Yours, etc.,

JOHN LANGTON

A LETTER ABOUT UNIVERSITY AFFAIRS

JOHN LANGTON
1856

A LETTER ABOUT UNIVERSITY AFFAIRS

Toronto, Nov. 12, 1856

Before entering into my own position in University matters I think I must give you a sketch of its history. It originated in our energetic old Bishop[*] who, when land was comparatively a drug, got together an endowment which, after being for twenty five years and more a perfect mine of wealth for speculators, is worth now little if anything short of £500,000. The University park of 150 acres in Toronto is even now worth £1,000 an acre, and what it may reach eventually no man can tell, though I hope it will never be sold. Besides this we have a great deal of valuable land in all parts of the Province, unsold and unproductive, and an income from rents and investments of upwards of £15,000 a year. About 1840, when Church of Englandism became less fashionable, King's College was legislated out of the Bishop's hands and passed through many phases, but the greatest change was in 1847. The endowment having even then become valuable, an effort was made to have it divided. There was to be a central University and local denominational Colleges were to get a share of the funds. This was the conservative doctrine, but Baldwin[†] always stuck out for the integrity of the institution and, as his party came in about that time with an overwhelming majority, Canada presented the astonishing sight of a nation voting against their individual interests and each denomination refusing to take a share of the plunder. Baldwin's bill converted King's College into the University of Toronto, an absolutely godless institution according to the pietists. A very few years however proved the bad working, not of his conception, but of his machinery. The convocation was not a numerous body enough to have much influence, though they had great powers, and the great majority of them had got their degrees in the Bishop's time and seceded to his rival institution Trinity College. The professors who formed the senate found all their time occupied in managing the selling and leasing of the lands and disentangling the immense mass of speculation which had existed. The professors of various branches of medicine were so numerous as to outwit the rest, and they first lowered the other salaries and then raised their own. Before three years the University and got into very bad odour, and had degenerated into a very expensive and very bad medical school. Hincks* now stepped in with a new Act. He abolished convocation and the faculties of Law and Medicine and their host of professors, he assumed the management of the property, and made two corporations out of one, viz. University College, the teaching body, and the University of Toronto, an abstraction for granting degrees to which University College and all the other colleges in the country were supposed to be affiliated, whilst Upper Canada College, a High School, (also an institution of the Bishop's creation with an income of nearly £6,000), lost its corporate existence and was placed under the manage ment of the University. This was all very well in theory, but in practice it has been worse than Baldwin's measure. It is all very well affiliating colleges, but as several of these bodies had charters for conferring degrees it involved the absurdity of affiliating one university to another. None of the colleges got any share of the spoil, which was all they cared for, and we further reduced the link by not making membership of some college necessary to membership of the University. It is somewhat of a novel experiment but I think a very sound one. We admit to degrees, scholarships, etc., anybody who will come up to our standard, which is a very much higher one than any of the local colleges exact or are capable of bringing their students up to. In practice therefore we have but one affiliated college, viz. University College, and yet the Senate (with the exception of myself and two or three others) consists of the heads of these other colleges, who bear us no love and, if they attend at all, do it only to obstruct. It has also had this ill effect, that the really important body, University College, has been thrown entirely into the hands of its President and only representative in our Senate, Dr. McCaul[*]. The professors, who are a body of as good men as any country need wish to possess, are extinguished and Dr. McCaul is University College; and as U. Coll. is the real successor of the late University and is maintained out of the same funds with no well drawn line of partition in the purse, he was very near becoming the University also. Then as to the funds—everything is vested in the Queen. We cannot even pay any current expense out of income without a statute to which the Governor* considers that he must give an active assent, that is he must consult his council and keep us sometimes six months waiting for the fiat. At least this was his interpretation of his visitational powers at first, but he is beginning to think a passive assent, (reserving to himself the power of disallowing), will be sufficient, and in practice we do spend money without any statute or consulting him at all As to the principal, we cannot touch that without an order in council placing it at our disposal; and there ought to be a similar order placing parts of our income at our disposal but as none are ever passed we go on spending as I said before without any formal authority The whole thing is a mass of confusion Ordinary current expenses must be paid and I draw cheques which the bursar pays, and, there being no line drawn, Dr McCaul also draws cheques, and as it is often doubtful whether it is an University or a college matter the bursar, who has to come to me to have his accounts audited, sometimes will pay the Dr's cheques and sometimes won't without my signature also. But if the Government are careless of us sometimes and leave a statute for raising a servant's wages £15 a year unsanctioned for six months, and for a year and a half never even acknowledge receipt of our application to have money placed at our disposal for buildings and a library, in other cases they are very attentive to our funds They ordered the bursar to lend £15,000 to a bankrupt railway, which would have been entirely lost had not another company a year afterwards bought them out and

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[*] The Right Rev. the Hon. John Strachan (1778-1867), first bishop of Toronto, and first president of King's College, Toronto.

[†] See note p. 257.

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* See note p. 227

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[*] See note p. 265.

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* Sir Edmund Walker Head, Bart. (1805-1868), governor-general of Canada (1854-61) Head had been from 1830 to 1837 a fellow of Merton College, Oxford.

somebody in the House (not having our case in view) put a clause into the Act that they should pay the debts of the bankrupt. We had a lot of land which in consequence of some of the new railways is going to be the site of a village. We have more money than we could or the Government would let us spend, but they ordered the land to be sold for £2,000 whilst four months afterwards it fetched £8,000 and is now probably worth £20,000. But the grossest of all cases was perpetrated immediately after the passing of the Act. Hincks passed another Act authorizing the Government to take such portion of the University park as might not be wanted for University purposes for the erection of Parliament Buildings, and the Senate not having been yet appointed, without enquiry what we wanted for University purposes, they forthwith took possession of the whole, turned the College out of its building and transferred them temporarily to the old Parliament house, and forthwith began draining, road making, etc., and, although the plan of Parliament Buildings fell through, the Board of Works continued to spend £10,000 in preparation. When the Government moved here the old Parliament Buildings were wanted, so they wanted to transfer the College to a vacant orphans' asylum, (a more appropriate suggestion), but remonstrances having been made they did add to and fit up the old medical school, (the old college buildings which cost us £15 000 having in the meantime been gutted by the Board of Works and rendered uninhabitable). This was the state of affairs when I came to live at Toronto. The next encroachment of the Government was opening a road through the park, without the common courtesy of consulting us about it. This led to a formal remonstrance. Three members of the Senate and three members of the Government met, with the Governor as moderator, and we agreed to a memorandum that our application for money to build, etc, should be answered (after a year and a half), which it was, and they gave us £75,000 for the buildings and £20,000 for the library, that they should hand over to us all the park west of the avenue, which they also did, reserving to themselves the other fifty* temporarily till it was decided where the seat of Government was to be, when it was also to be given up if not wanted for Parliament Buildings, and lastly that they should do nothing to this other half in the meantime without consulting us It has been decided by a solemn vote of Parliament that the seat of Government shall not be at Toronto, nevertheless they won't give up the east half, though we wanted it for the site of our new buildings (which I am glad of, for it was a bad site), and, without any notice to us and in spite of our remonstrances, they fitted up the old college buildings (which we wanted to pull down and use the materials) as a lunatic asylum, enclosing about twenty acres of our park, and to add insult to injury the official designation is *The University Lunatic Asylum* This was the feather that broke Blake's† back and he resigned the Chancellorship The nominal feather at least, for I suspect he had other reasons.

This is a very long story, but it is necessary for you to understand my position. The University itself has hardly a friend in the country, and many enemies The Church looks upon us as godless, and *perhaps* would have no objection to a slice of the endowment. The Methodists, the next most powerful body with Ryer son* at their head, make no secret of their hatred and their aspirations for a share of the money. The Church of Rome professes to be friendly, but though some of our more active members of the Senate are Catholic it is observable that we never have had one Catholic student. The Church of Scotland has an University of its own which is very poor and very inefficient, which may lead one to suspect how the wind blows though they are too cautious to express an opinion. The only powerful sect with us is the Free Church to which may be added some Baptists, Independents and other small fry. The Law† ignores our degrees except those in Arts, and the leading members of the bar are not churchmen. Medicine is against us almost to a man, for the dissatisfied professors are establishing private schools and fear a restoration of the faculty. Baldwin and his friends stand aloof and prophecy evil of us. Of the five Upper Canada Ministers, three don't conceal their desire to divide the endowment, and one is too insignificant to have an opinion or to give it weight if he had one. The governor general is about the best friend we have, but he is a very difficult man to deal with and brings old country notions to apply where they will not fit. A governor general is a trump card certainly but in some respects the least reliable card in the pack, first, because he must do after all what his ministry wants and he can never tell from day to day who they may be, and secondly, because from his position he acts upon very imperfect knowledge of facts, one day ridiculously alarmed at some noisy newspaper editor and the next day ear wigged by you know not whom. This is certainly not a very flourishing state for an university, and my own position in it does not make it better Here am I a perfect stranger in Toronto come suddenly amongst them to upset old established ways and men, not loved much you may depend upon it by Dr. McCaul, and looked upon with suspicion at any rate by Blake and his friends, brought into constant collision with the Government whose servant I am, and with nobody to back me except the professors who from hatred of McCaul stick to me like bricks but without much power, and half a dozen very worthy Baptist, Independent and Presbyterian parsons who enable me to carry a majority in the Senate I have nobody to consult with, for my parsonic allies are quiet men who don't like any more responsibility than is involved in a vote and the professors very wisely don't like appearing openly in the troubled waters. It has been a very difficult card to play even if I had succeeded to the helm in smooth water, but to take the command in a storm is nervous work. You may easily imagine from what I have said before that the ship is not in the very best order or the crew much to be relied on, but you cannot conceive unless you saw it the utter state of confusion in which everything is I *must* put things into some order and in doing so I cannot help at every step treading on somebody's toes. Dr McCaul is no doubt a first rate scholar and a very clever man and he has one element fitting him for command, that whether it is by bullying or by compromising or by artful countermining he never loses sight of the main object—to have his own way in the end, but he is absolutely deficient in the talent of order. Partly perhaps it is design. The end he always keeps in view, the means he is quite unscrupulous about, and provided a thing will serve his turn in the end he cares not for its being suitable to the present state of affairs. No matter how heterogeneous or inconsistent with each other the materials may be, if he has or thinks he has the clue by which he can fit each of them into some place in his proposed building they will serve his turn. You may think I am prejudiced against the man because we have been brought into rivalry, but I formed my opinion of him very early in the day and those that know him best entertain the same. Whilst I was writing the previous page I had a visit from Dr. Wilson,* one of our professors and, the conversation turning on McCaul, he warned me for the fiftieth time to beware of him and he added,—if he opposes you you may be safe enough by fighting it out, but if ever he entirely agrees with you and appears to go cordially with you, beware, he will trip you up if he can. I omitted one trait of McCaul's—when a man has such complicated plans on his hands he can rarely be certain what turn things may take and he very rarely commits himself so far to an opinion that he cannot withdraw from it, or does a thing so effectually that it cannot be undone. If he does not see clearly how it will work in, he had rather do nothing and wait the course of events. Blake on the other hand was as determined in gaining his object, but he went straight to it regardless of any obstacles. He was very imperious and hard working and wanted not only to do everything his own way but to do it himself, and as his duties in Chancery left him little leisure he left things undone or half done, or, what was worse, to be finished by McCaul. These two men had the entire management of everything and a pretty mess they made of it. Things had got to such a pass, there was such a want of system, that I *had* to undertake a reform. There is hardly a thing that was done which I have not had more or less to undo, and that with the greatest difficulty in finding out what was the former practice. Blake was ill after his resignation and is now in England; the professors have always been studiously kept in the dark by McCaul, and McCaul himself impenetrable. Some little I can glean from the registrar and bursar, but I am compelled to tread on their toes too. They have been very cordial with me, for they hate McCaul, but the bursar's office stops more than £3,000 a year out of our £15,000, which I want to reform, and the registrar is the bursar's son in law. The deeper I search the more I find confusion, pervading everything. The monetary system or rather no system is radically bad, the limits of the College and University authority almost undefined, the very course of instruction or rather examination has to be entirely remodelled (here the professors can really assist me with advice and they never were consulted or their views properly placed before the Senate, whilst McCaul is a classical scholar and nothing more). In this branch of my reforms I find very great difficulty, for though I think I can carry my changes with some compromises I cannot help seeing that my personal friends whilst voting with me have some doubts whether I am really competent to upset a whole system and build up a new one in opposition to McCaul who has been a fellow or a president of a college all his life, and I can well excuse them for I have considerable doubts myself. Another change I have had to make which is anything but popular with the students. We had a much larger income than sufficed for our wants and, proceeding upon the plan that anything we left would be snapped up by others and only sharpen their appetite, we spent in some things most lavishly, granting scholarships and prizes without limit, so that it was the exception rather than the rule if a student had not a scholarship or half a dozen prizes. But now we have not only very much increased our expenses in other ways but we are about to spend on buildings, library and museum near £100,000 from our capital, and to enable our income thereby reduced to meet necessary expenses we must cut off the superfluities. I therefore attacked the prizes and scholarships, and succeeded in reducing the latter to one third and the former to one-tenth. Upper Canada College has been a great source of trouble. It is a school endowed with about £6,000 a year of public money, and it is without exception the worst school I ever saw or heard of. Blake had commenced the attack here, and as a preparatory measure had got the Principal and the worst master pensioned off. How bad is the system, or again I say no system, you may imagine from this one fact. There is a commercial form, viz. boys who do not learn Latin and Greek. Out of nine masters, some of them with £500 or £600 a year, one at £100 a year has been assigned to a class of about fifty in which, on the negative principle of not learning Latin and Greek, are placed boys ranging from ten to eighteen years of age, whatever their qualifications may be in other respects. Blake I say had commenced the attack and had sketched out a very good scheme, which is however in abeyance till we get a new Principal, which we are not likely to do in a hurry I am afraid. Being anxious to get a good man we made his salary £750 which, with his share of the fees and a capital house, firewood, etc, is at least equal to £1,000 a year, which is as much as any of the judges get except the Chief Justice and the Chancellor We also arranged that he was to have charge of the boarding house, which has hitherto been a disgrace to the school and upon which we have been expending this summer £2,000 to £3,000 Now the Governor promised to get us a man and being totally ignorant of the country he told him that he might probably by the boarders raise his income £400 or £500 more Our man very wisely I think refused to have anything to do with boarding except superintendence, and suggested that we might take the profits of the boarding service ourselves and allow him something towards the same sum by fees or some other way. Now if the Principal managed the boarding house, if he was a good manager he might have made something of it though never £400 a year, but if we are to manage it we must pay somebody else, for the service, what the Principal would have got, so we totally declined to make any addition to the salary, and the Governor was in a great pet and said he washed his hands of the whole concern The spending of the money I think I have at last got into a somewhat more satisfactory condition I have got committees appointed, each regulated by its own statute, for the buildings, the grounds, the library, the museum, the observatory (toward which the Government contributes), and Upper Canada College (which has its own funds). All of these have money placed at their disposal from time to time by the Senate and are responsible for the spending of it, instead of the miscellaneous system which formerly prevailed, all centering at last on Dr McCaul. On these committees I have also placed the best of the professors, which for the first time gives them any proper voice in the management of affairs.

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* [acres]

† See note p. 255

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* The Rev. Egerton Ryerson, superintendent of education.

† I mean the profession who whilst admitting people to practise in two years less who have our degree in Arts, take no notice of our degrees in Law. I don't know what the use of them is. The examination is very absurd being all on questions of practice and detail whilst it ought to be upon first principles, but I am in hot water enough without attempting to meddle with Blake's programme of law studies. [J L.]

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*Daniel (afterwards Sir Daniel) Wilson (1816-1892), professor of history and English literature in the University of Toronto (1853-92) and president of University College (1881-92).

Since I finished the last sheet I think I have got the examination subjects into a more favourable position than I ever succeeded in doing before. Dr McCaul and I are a committee to arrange details and it is impossible to move him a step. Day after day we meet and talk over the thing—we apparently get a thing settled one day but it has all to be gone over again the next, and he is constantly starting new ideas, merely I believe to create delay He has already put the thing off so long that we have been obliged to commence a new year on the old system, but I think by stealing two whole days from the office and sitting up to three o'clock in the morning I have at last got things into train and we may get a new system adopted for next year I often think I am a fool to trouble myself so much about it. What is the University to me that I should bother myself with it? Why can't I take my £200 a year with as little trouble as possible as long as I stay here? But it is not my nature any more than it would be yours, and besides I am positively ashamed to see our printed programme, such a mass of absurdity is it. I must in vindication of my folly give you a sample or two and there are many more. We have a department of History and a man at the head of it Dr Daniel Wilson, well known in Europe as well as here, but his department is really ridiculous In a five years course he only brings English History down to Henry VII, and there is absolutely no other history except that of

Egypt down to Cleopatra and that of Spain under Ferdinand and Isabella, French and German history going with those languages, which are under the care of a very worthy pudding headed old Italian to whom they have been assigned upon the principle, which appears to be accepted elsewhere as well as in Canada, that foreign languages are safe in the hands of a foreigner. The foreign language department is also most contemptible which must I am afraid be laid at the door of poor Dr. Forneri,* but Dr. Wilson is innocent of the shortcomings of history, except in as far as it may be a retribution upon him for the holy hatred with which he regards McCaul, a hatred most religiously returned. As examples of the inconsistency of our system I may mention that during the whole course three or four scholarships are assigned to Classics and to Mathematics for one to the Natural sciences, but the last year, when we end with five gold medals, two are given to the Natural Sciences and only three amongst all the rest of the departments. Also that, whilst scholarships are confined to men in the first class, there is nothing for the second, and such valuable prizes for the third that I had a man remonstrating the other day at the injustice done to him by the examiner placing him, by mistake he contended, in the first class. We have a department of Metaphysics and Ethics under a most learned and excellent man Dr. Beaven.† After the first two years we allow students to exercise options and they may under certain conditions drop Classics, but then they must retain Metaphysics, yet

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* James Forneri (1789-1869), professor of modern languages in University College Toronto (1853-66). See J. King *op. cit.*

† The Rev. James Beaven (1801-1875), professor of ethics and metaphysics in King's College, the University of Toronto and University College, Toronto (1842-71).

Dr Beaven insists upon examining almost altogether from Aristotle, Cicero, etc, and positively requires them to read more Greek and Latin that Dr. McCaul himself I argue in vain but I will have my own way in this case, Dr. McCaul assenting and delighted to see me getting into trouble with Dr. Beaven, and the Dr., who in former days on account of Clergy Reserve heresies had told me he looked upon me as little less than a heathen, now plainly intimates that I am also one of the unlettered

The buildings have been a terrible source of trouble all summer. Money, site, style, plan, elevation, architect's pay, have all been the subject of endless discussion and annoyance We got the money in Blake's day, but the Governor General seems to think that he is personally responsible for the expenditure and is always interfering, now making light of any expenditure which hits his fancy at the moment and ignoring all difficulty as to squaring our expenses to our reduced income from otherwise appropriated capital, and now overcome with a niggardly fit The battle of the site too was fought in Blake's day and helped to his defeat for both he and the architect were tempted by a site at the end of a fine avenue nearly a mile long St. Peter's would look magnificent there, but anything we could build would be but a mushroom at that distance and we should have had to have sacrified convenience to great elevation. I was not sorry when the lunatic asylum blocked us out from that ground, for we have a beautiful site elsewhere From this time my troubles commenced. Blake proposed to make me the building committee but I declined unless he and Chief Justice

Draper * were associated with me, promising to do all the work I had not sufficiently calculated upon Blake's desire to do everything himself, whilst between Chancery and the government he could do nothing However we took ample powers, and for two valuable months after Cumberland returned † we did nothing After Blake's resignation I had it all to myself, for Draper does not want to interfere and never does unless I ask his advice, and unless it had been in one man's hands we never could have got along at all The site being chosen Cumberland drew a first sketch of a Gothic building but the Governor would not hear of Gothic and recommended Italian, shewing us an example of the style, a palazzo at Sienna which, if he were not Governor General and had written a book on art, I should have called one of the ugliest buildings I ever saw However after a week's absence the Governor came back with a new idea it was to be Byzantine, and between them they concocted a most hideous elevation. After this the Governor was absent on a tour for several weeks during which we polished away almost all traces of Byzantine and got a hybrid with some features of Norman, of early English, etc, with faint traces of Byzantium and the Italian palazzo, but altogether a not unsightly building and on his return His Excellency approved When our Government were taunted in the House with their want of policy and unnatural alliance of parties and they were asked whether they called themselves a conservative or a reform or a coalition ministry, one of them replied that they

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* The Hon William Henry Draper (1801-1877) chief justice of the court of Common Pleas in Upper Canada (1856-63), and chief justice of Upper Canada (1863-77)

† From England where he had gone in connection with preparations for the designing of the building

called themselves the Government of Canada So we, if asked after the style of our building, may call it the Canadian style; and to an uncritical eye it is a very respectable and rather imposing structure, or will be, but the various breeds which entered into its composition have cropped out in somewhat different proportions in its two principal facades. Concurrently with this of course the plan was progressing, and as the College is also to be accommodated I had to consult its authorities It has evidently been a sore with McCaul that he has nothing to say to the building, but as I have got absolute power here I will keep it. However I had to ask them to appoint a committee to confer with me and he made a last great effort to consider it a joint building committee, but not being backed by the Professors I escaped that rock. Their demands for space were however outrageous and at last it was only by telling them, as the Governor authorized me to do, that if they did not moderate their expectations he would stop the building altogether that I succeeded in making a compromise I shewed the plan to the Governor who was in a very bad temper that morning, hardly looked at it, assented, and went on his tour; so the elevation was completed in accordance and I advertised for tenders. When he came back and the whole thing was submitted to him, he counted up the lecture rooms, stormed at our extravagance, and said he would stop the whole thing However I evaded that difficulty by scratching out the word lecture room and erasing all appearance of seats for the students when he said it was much more sensible, so we proceeded to stake out the ground. But here an unexpected difficulty arose It seems that His Excellency had all along thought that the South front was to face the East [West?], and nothing would satisfy him but so it must be and under his superintendence we proceeded to measure and stake out, Cumberland's* face exhibiting blank despair for it brought his chemical laboratory where no sun would ever shine into it, his kitchens, etc., into the prettiest part of the grounds, and several other inconveniences which His Excellency said could be easily remedied. However there stands on the ground an elm tree a remnant of the old forest, with a long stem as such trees have and a little bush on the top of it, not unlike a broom with its long handle stuck into the ground, and it soon became evident that the tree would fall a sacrifice. This he would not permit and when I hinted that it would certainly be blown down before long, he told me it was the handsomest tree about Toronto (as it certainly is one of the tallest), and politely added "but you Canadians have a prejudice against trees." He then stalked off the ground followed by his A.D.C. I thought Cumberland would have thrown the whole thing up that day, he was so annoyed, but we took up the stakes and staked it out our way with the South front facing the South, and by a little stuffing and squeezing we got the tree into such a position that it may be saved but with the almost certainty that when it is blown down it will take some of the students' quarters with it. It is some comfort that that will occur before Tom† is old enough to go to college, or I should be uneasy in stormy nights. However I bless that tree and hope its shadow may never be less for it got us out of [the] scrape. When the Governor paid us a visit next day he was quite satisfied and complimentary, and in congratulating us upon the safety of the tree he said to Cumberland with that impertinence which governors general can so well indulge in "For I am sure you can never put anything up half as pretty." That day I met John Macdonald in the street who said "so I hear you have been cutting down the trees," and calling upon Lady Head that afternoon with the ladies she asked, "Did you save that tree?"—upon which a smile passed between her and the Aide. The Chief Justice of New Brunswick also, who was there on a visit, was present at the first indignation and suggested that the tree might perhaps be transplanted adding, "did not your Excellency transplant one almost as large at St. John?" The great man muttered something about a failure, from all which I conclude that if we Canadians have prejudices about trees our governors are not quite exempt from the same. This was pretty nearly the last of my troubles about the building. During these interviews and others on other subjects with the Governor I learnt a trick or two about great men. Of course it is very improper to argue with a governor general, but I was not bred a courtier and am somewhat inclined to argument. But I never do argue in presence of a third person, especially before Cumberland against whom it is clear the Governor has a great prejudice. He has often upbraided me for deserting him when we were agreed upon a point. But alone I have no such scruples. I stick to my point stiffly and often gain it, and if I find it prudent to appear convinced I generally can get it accomplished by returning to the subject next day in somewhat a different direction. Hitherto at any rate I have got everything I much cared about my own way except the removal of Upper Canada College on which he is inflexible. With all its endowment it is getting deeper into debt, but it stands on ground worth £50,000 at least, far too confined for its accommodation with proper playgrounds, etc., and on a main thoroughfare where you cannot keep the boys out of mischief, whilst we have ground in abundance in the University park and could put up far better buildings for the money and gain £1,000 a year besides, almost exactly central too to the space and not very far from the centre of the population of Toronto But Upper Canada College lies almost at his door, and I suppose he thinks that the centre of the world whilst it is really at one corner.

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*Lieut.-Col. Frederick William Cumberland (1821-1881), civil engineer and architect.

†The writer's eldest son.

You may easily imagine that all these things keep me pretty fully employed. Indeed since my appointment I think the University has taken up fully half my time and much more than half my thoughts. And all for what? For £200 a year you will say But in two or three years at any rate I shall be moved away and have no farther connection with them, even if I remain as long or the University itself continues in existence Since Blake's resignation they have not been able to get anybody to take the Chancellorship and I am not surprised—at least no one whom they will appoint. Dr McCaul has been moving heaven and earth to be appointed, and as he can play the courtier very well I should not be very much surprised if in the dearth of others he may succeed. That would effectually finish the University In the meantime however, the lawyers say that everything we do is illegal, as our corporation is incomplete and the Governor only verbally agrees to our Statutes and tells us to act on them but does not formally sanction them, intending that we shall pass one general statute including the whole when we have a chancellor It is not a pleasant position to be in and many members of the Senate are beginning to talk of ceasing attendance altogether. Our contract for the building too is in a curious position If the Senate does not exist surely it cannot contract, and our Solicitor had great objections to drawing up the contract and told me if I signed it he thought I should be personally liable. However I ran the risk and signed it and affixed the seal of the University, acting by the Chief Justice's advice who said that unless the seal is affixed by fraud no court would refuse to recognize it. Rumour says that we are to have no chancellor but that we are to be left as we are till Parliament meets when there will be a new Act. In any case there will be a new Act, which the Governor is now drawing up It will restore us the management of our property and make us independent of the Government and reunite or draw closer the bonds between the College and the University. This is as it should be but can he carry it? He says he thinks he can depend upon Lower Canada for support but I doubt, and above all can he depend upon his Government which I doubt more Once introduce the subject in Parliament and no one can tell how it will come out of it. The whole thing may be legislated away, and most probably I shall. It is disheartening, but what is a man to do Every stone that goes up in the building, every book that is bought is so much more anchorage and so much less plunder to fight for. It is said so live as if you might die to-morrow, and in this case I try to do the converse to act as if we were to live for ever If we survive it is so much gain, if we fall the good we do will not be thrown away altogether, there will probably be some remnant left to benefit by it, or some other man who will have an abuse the less to correct,

A NOTE ABOUT THE CLERGY RESERVES

THE CLERGY RESERVES

[In reply to a request from England for information as to how the Church of England in Canada managed without the Clergy Reserves.]

Ottawa, 29th Oct., 1869.

When I was in politics this was a vexed question. Of course as a churchman I was willing enough to have any aid for the church, but in a country like Canada, where we have no established form of religion, where the Church of England is in a decided minority, it would have been manifestly unjust to have a public maintenance for it, and not for other denominations, and however stoutly we had fought for retaining this benefit, it would only have been a question of time and have raised all sorts of ill will amongst us.

I therefore went for the abolition of the Clergy Reserves, being certainly the only Church of England man in the House and nearly the only one in the country that did so. You may imagine that I had hard times of it with our people, without gaining much support from the other side. The arguments which had really convinced me—the injustice of the existing arrangement, and the impolicy of protracting a useless contest—had no weight with my friends, and being hard pressed I boldly argued that the Clergy Reserves, instead of being any real benefit, were a drag upon the progress of the Church of England, and that we should thrive twice as well without them. I well remember a

speech in the House in which I advanced this argument, and brought forward as an instance a township (Dummer) in my own county. About half of it was settled with Presbyterians (Scotch), the other half by Wiltshire men with a sprinkling of northern Irish, who were also for the most part churchmen. The Wiltshire men were very strenuous for having a clergyman sent to them, and argued, not without reason, that if the six-sevenths of the land which they occupied could support them, the other seventh reserved for the clergy ought to provide them with a parson, but not one of them ever dreamt of their paying anything themselves towards his support. From their childhood upward it had appeared to be in the immutable order of things that there should be a parson, and whilst the land was there why need they, who had hard work to live themselves, pay anything? The Scotch, having nothing else to depend on, soon subscribed to have a minister to visit them once a month and then once a fortnight, and finally built him a modest house and had one all to themselves. Wandering Methodists also visited them from time to time, and the Irishmen mostly joined that sect; but the Wiltshire men were very stubborn, and never went to church at all. After a while however the young people had to get married, and there were children to be christened, and old people to be comforted in sickness and buried, and the Presbyterian minister being at hand they went to him, and ended in becoming regular attendants and subscribing with the rest of the congregation. If there had been no such nominal provision as the Clergy Reserves, I argued, these men would still have belonged to the church. Now you may imagine how satisfactory it was to find that within a year after the Clergy Reserves were secularized, the

JOHN LANGTON
AETAT 70

old Wiltshire men, finding they could no longer rely upon government for anything, and taking example from their Scotch neighbours, subscribed and built a very nice little church, and parsonage, and have now a resident clergyman amongst them. But the evil once done is not so easily undone. They have not got all their Wiltshiremen back from the Presbyterians, and very few of the Irish from the Methodists. But since 1860 the members of the Church of England have increased in numbers. I was told by our former clergyman at Fenelon Falls that in his new country parish near Toronto he had nearly doubled his congregation since the abolition of the Clergy Reserves, almost all the new accessions being old churchmen who for want of a regular church had got into the habit of going to the Methodists. After all the abuse which I got in 1854, much of it very hard personal abuse, I have lived to be thanked by more than one clergyman for aiding in conferring a great benefit on the Church. The fact is that there is no denomination so well able to support its clergy as ours, and none that did so little till we were thrown on our own resources. It has also had a wholesome effect on the clergy themselves. The laity hold the purse strings, and cannot be altogether set aside as something profane. At a meeting of the Church Society at Quebec some of the persons were explaining their experiences in extracting money from their congregations. One of them, recommending frequency of small contributions instead of larger sums occasionally, appealed to me, as having been a farmer, whether steady milking was not the best rule to follow. I assented as to the milking, but added that I had found good and steady feeding quite as essential, which plan I strongly recommended the assembled parsons to try.

INDEX OF NAMES

Abercrombie, Sir Ralph, 128
Aberdeen, 61
Adelaide township, 14, 72, 73
Albany, 160
Athill *or* Atthill, —, 32, 50, 62, 145, 176, 190, 191, 192

Baby, —, 269
Badgley, William, 217
Bald lake, 38
Baldwin, Robert, 257, 277, 278, 279, 283
Baldwin (Colonel), 48
Balsam Canal, 129
Balsam lake, 10, 13, 14, 69, 74, 142, 156, 176
Bank of Montreal, xxxviii
Bank of Upper Canada, xxxix, 98, 163, 240, 244
Barber, E. C., 232, 233
Barclay (Dr. and Mrs.), 176
Beaston, —, 50
Beaven, James, 290, 291
Bedford, —, 22
Beehive, The, xv, 203
Begley, Thomas A., 270
Belfast, 50
Bellingham, —, 69
Bethune, —, 95, 100, 140
Bettridge, William, 142
Bick, George, 203
Bidwell, —, 162, 171
Birley, R., 166
Blake, William Hume, 265, 282, 283, 284, 285, 286, 287, 291, 292, 296
Blandford, 56
Blythe, xv, 129, 134, 143, 148, 154, 159, 164, 166, 172, 174, 175, 182, 183, 191, 194
Blythe Hall, xiii, xiv
Bob-ca je-won unk, 43, 56, 73, 74, 97, 102, 104, 106, 109. *See also* Bob Cajwin, Bob-cajion-unk *and* Bobcaygeon
Bob-cajion-unk, 29, 32, 33. *See also* Bobcajewonunk, Bob Cajwin *and* Bobcaygeon.
Bob Cajwin, 5, 14, 17, 22, 24, 29. *See also* Bob-cajion-unk, Bobcajewonunk *and* Bobcaygeon
Bobcaygeon, xxviii, 32, 120, 144, 146, 152, 166, 175, 179, 181, 182, 204. *See also* Bobcajewonunk, Bob-cajion-unk *and* Bob Cajwin
Boston, 159, 160
Boswell, George M., 167
Botany Bay, xxvi
Bouchette, Robert Shore Milnes, 214
Boyce, —, 63
Boyd, Mossom, 152, 168, 203, 204, 207, 209
Bridgenorth, 21
Brock, 60
Brown, (Colonel) and family, 6, 86, 121, 133
Buckhorn lake, 14, 28, 39
Buckhorn rapids, 205, 209
Buffalo, xxxii
Burleigh rapids, 205
Burnt river, 13
Bury, William Coutts Keppel, Viscount, 213

Caddy, Edward, 104
Cambie, Charles, 231
Cambleton, 6, 21
Cambridge, xiv, xxxiii, 23
Cameron *or* Cameron's lake, 13, 23, 42, 69, 74, 128, 137, 177
Cameron's Falls, 6, 9, 10, 13, 18, 19, 24, 31, 42, 45, 49, 50, 56, 63, 64, 69, 72, 97, 102, 123, 127, 129, 137, 141, 144, 166. *See also* Fenelon Falls
Campbell, Sir John, 62
Campbellford, 8
Canada Company, xxvii, 73

Canadian Historical Review, v
Cartier, Sir George Etienne, 216, 251
Cartwright township, 48
Cary, Joseph, 214
Cauchon, Joseph Edouard, 216, 261, 263
Cayley, William, 213, 214, 215, 217, 218, 222, 225, 230, 237, 241, 247, 255, 257, 259, 262, 263, 264, 265, 269, 271, 273
Cedar Point, 45
Chaffey, Benjamin, 221
Chauveau, Pierre Joseph Olivier, 239
Chemong lake, 7, 10, 14, 17, 21, 105. *See also* Mud lake
Cobourg, 4, 5, 6, 14, 16, 20, 24, 60, 74, 96, 98, 99, 100, 101, 163, 164
Colborne, Sir John, xxvii, 11, 128, 129, 134, 160, 172
Colbourne district, 183, 193
Colonial Advocate, xxiii, xxiv
Commercial Bank, 166
Constitution Island, 160, 176
Cork, xxxix, 62
Crane, Bill, 28
Crawford (Miss), 50
Credit river, xxxi
Cruse, Thomas, 230, 231, 256, 272
Cumberland, Frederick William, 292, 294, 295
Cummings, —, 207
Currer, Alice, xv

Darcus *or* D'Arcus, —, 17, 60, 62, 66
Davidson, (Captain), 166
Dawson, —, 227
Deer Bay *or* lake, 66
Dennistoun, Robert, 137, 142, 144, 147, 156, 164, 166, 167, 174, 176, 178, 179, 180, 182, 191
Dennistoun, (Mrs), 179
Dickenson, William, 219, 225, 230, 242
Dobbs, (Captain), 63, 123, 127, 166
D'Olier, —, 182
Douro township, xxxix, 7, 104
Draper, William Henry, 292
Drummond, Lewis Thomas, 216
Dublin, 62
Dudley, —, 154
Duff, Grant, 50, 61
Dummer, Township of, 302
Dundas, 79
Dunsford, Hartley, 203
Dunsford, James Hartley, xv, 203
Dunsford, James Wicks, 203, 204, 209
Durham, Lord, xxvii
Durham, County of, 170

Elgin, 60
Elliot, Stephen, 6, 9, 16, 22
Emily township, 48
Erie Canal, 4
Erie, Lake, 14, 30
Erindale, xxx
Evans, —, 50

Farmers Bank, 163
Fenelon, Township of, 16, 25, 31, 50, 65, 72, 75, 79, 87, 103, 119, 127, 134, 138, 178
Fenelon Falls, xv, 8, 72, 167, 174, 175, 178, 179, 188, 192, 203. *See also* Cameron's Falls
Ferguson, —, 99, 113, 120, 121
Fisher, Janet, 72, 176, 177
Fisher (Judge), 177
Fitchett, Abraham, 109, 110, 116, 117
Five Nations Indians, 126. *See also* Mohawk Indians
Forbes, Robert Millar, 72
Forneri, James, 290
Fortune, J. R., 168
Fortune, Thomas, 168, 176
Fortye, —, 128
Foster, —, 176
Fraser *or* Frazer, (Mr. or Mrs.), 50, 62, 104, 105, 153, 164, 166

Gilchrist, John, 167
Glasgow, 167
Glenelg, Lord, 106
Globe, 271
Glyn, Mills and Company, 219
Gordon, Robert, 43, 49, 52, 64, 161
Gore District, xxxix
Grand Trunk Railway Company, 219, 245, 257
Grant, W. L., xix, xxv, xxix, xxx, xxxii

Greene, —, 231
Grey —, 115, 117
Griffin, —, 176 177

Hackett, —, 156
Haig —, 152
Hall, Basil, 7
Hall, — 71, 120
Hamilton xxxix, 26 78
Hamilton Gawin, 164 167 174, 176, 177, 182
Hamilton, Robert, 144 155 164
Hamilton, William 144
Hamilton (Major) and family 128, 133, 136 137 138, 142, 143 144, 146, 147, 153 155, 168, 176, 177
Harvey township 50, 126
Hay, (Lieutenant), 37 38, 39, 40, 41, 42, 43, 50
Head, Sir Edmund Walker, xvi 212 259 280
Head, Sir Francis Bond, 160, 162, 171 172, 180 183
Head, Lady 295
Heywood, Sir Benjamin, xv, 179
Heywood Messrs H., and Co., 179 182, 191
Hincks, Sir Francis, 227, 252, 264, 266, 278
Hodgins, John George, 251, 252, 253
Howard, 6, 21
Howison John, xix, xxiii, xxvi xxxi xxxv, xxxvii
Hudson river, 4
Hudson River and Oswego Canal, 160
Hudson's Bay Company 155
Hughes, —, 69, 71
Hunter Joseph 16, 17, 18, 49, 50
Huron, County of 213
Huron, Lake, 14

Illinois 146

James, —, 128, 129
Jameson, Anna Brownell, xix xxiv xxix, xxx xxxi, xxxii xxxiii, xxxiv xxxix
Jameson Robert Sympson xxxiv
Jameson, —, 9, 24 43 44 45, 56, 54 56, 57, 61, 62, 63, 69 70, 72, 73, 80, 108, 109 117, 128, 131 133, 134 136, 141, 144, 145 153, 154, 166 172, 179, 189 161

Kawartha lakes, 4
Kennedy W P M, xix
Killaly Hamilton Hartley, 270
Kinashgingiquash, Lake, 35
King John, 265 290
King — 50
King's College xxxii xxxiii 277, 278
Kingston xxxv xxxviii, 21, 165, 172 173, 176 213
Kirkpatrick, Sir George Airey, 168
Kirkpatrick, Stafford Frederick, 165, 166, 174, 176 177
Kirkpatrick, Thomas, 166
Kirkpatrick, (Mrs. S. F), 176, 177

Lakefield, 46
Langevin, —, 227
Langton Anne vi, ix, xiv xv
Langton, Lydia, xv
Langton, Thomas, xiii, xiv, xv
Langton, William, v xiii, xiv, xv 68, 179 182
Lecky, William Edward Hartpole, 266
Lemieux, François Xavier, 216, 270
Lennox and Addington, County of, 171, 177
Lisbon, 61
Liverpool xiii, xvi 8, 9, 11, 24, 60, 61, 72, 97 113, 154, 159
London, 161, 190
London (Canada West), xxxix
London District, 66
Londonderry, 62
Long Island, 160

McAndrew Alexander, 17, 18, 19 27, 29, 32, 33 43, 44 45, 46, 47 48 49, 50 51 56, 57 58 59 60 61, 64, 65, 67 68, 69 70, 76, 82, 83 84, 93 94, 95 97 105 106 107 108, 109 116 118, 125, 127 129, 133, 134 137 138, 139, 140, 143, 144 145 146, 147, 149, 150, 153 154 155, 156 175 186, 152

McCall, —, 69, 71, 76, 79 80, 83, 84, 94, 98 96, 105, 107, 109 129 145
McCaul John, 265, 279 280, 284, 285 286, 289 290 291, 293, 296
McConnell, —, 46 174, 175
McCue. *See* McQue
Macdonald, Sir John Alexander 215, 216 217 248, 257, 258 263, 271, 286
McDonell Alexander, 16, 37, 78, 121, 167, 168, 170, 173
McGregor, John xix
McGue. *See* McQue
McInnes, —, 117
Mackenzie, William Lyon, xxii, xxiv, 101 162 167 170 214, 250
McKue, Billy 17
Maclaren (Major) 72 165
MacMullen, John, xix
McNab, Sir Allan Napier, 256 257 266, 256, 266
McQue Billy 36, 165, 116, 122
McQue, James, 17 22, 53
Macredie, Thomas 137, 144, 146, 153, 154, 155, 164, 165, 167, 171
Macredie, William A. 69, 70 71, 74, 78, 79, 83, 84 92, 94, 97, 98, 102, 107, 108 109 114, 115, 117 118, 129 133, 134, 137 144 145, 146 150 154 155, 164, 166
Magrath T W., xix, xxii, xxxi
Manchester, xv, 11, 103
Manchester and Salford Bank xv
Mariposa township, 80
Mavor, James xix, xxxi, xxiv
Meilleur Jean Baptiste, 230 252
Menzies, John 142, 164, 165 166
Merino 72
Mersey river 97
Michigan xxv 166
Miles, Robert S. 155
Mississauga Indians 76, 125
Mohawk Indians, 23 124 125 126
Montreal, xxii, xxxv, 14, 61, 66, 72 75 76, 101, 128 202, 216, 221
Moore, 66
Morison, John, 60, 61
Morris, William, 215
Morrison Joseph Curran, 257, 259, 266
Mud lake, 7 21, 27, 43, 137, 167, 176 *See also* Chemong lake
Mudge, —, 67 23, 50

Need Thomas, 5, 10 14, 16 16, 32, 34 39, 43, 46 46 50 57, 62 106, 109 126 129 133, 134, 144 145, 152 153, 176, 179, 180 182 190
Newcastle District 6 5, 11, 12, 14, 35 66, 66 130
New York, 3, 4, 154, 158, 180 180, 182
Niagara *and* Niagara Falls, xxxi 3, 24, 26 76, 76, 80 82 172
Nicholls, —, 202 206
Nogy *Captain*, 22, 28

O'Flynn Daniel, 46, 47, 49 66
Ohio, xxxi 76, 80
Oliphant, Laurence, 212
Ontario, Lake, 14, 24 79 96, 120
Ops township 6, 14 47 46, 57, 109, 152
Ormskirk (Lancashire), xiii
Oswego 4, 166
Otonabee river 5, 21, 25 128, 166 170
Ottawa 301
Oxford, xxxiii 63

Parr — 64
Patterson James 232
Perry, Peter, 152 170
Pestalozzi Heinrich, xiv
Peterborough, vi, ix, xv, xvi, xxxiv, xxxix, 4, 5, 6, 7 11 14, 17 18 21 24, 25, 26 28, 29, 33 34, 38, 38, 39 43 49 50, 51 52 55, 56 57 60 62, 64 70 71 72, 75 82, 25 86, 88, 99, 104 105, 107 109 118, 119 120 121 128, 130 131, 132, 133 136, 137 138, 140, 141 142 144, 145, 147 150, 155 160 163, 164, 166 167, 168 169 170 172, 173, 175, 177 180 181 182, 183, 191, 193 202 203 206 206, 207, 209

Peterborough, County of, xvi
Peterborough Gazette 208
Philadelphia, 159
Pickering, 90
Pigeon creek, 48
Pigeon lake, 6, 14, 17, 22, 82, 104, 105
Plains, The, xxxix, 128
Port Hope 74
Port Hope Canal 74, 78
Prescott xxxv
Providence, 169
Purdon (Captain) 166
Purdy, —, 46, 79, 81, 82, 98, 107, 147, 161

Quebec xxii, xxvii, 152, 202, 206, 207, 209, 213, 216, 303
Quinte, Bay of 14, 21

Rebridge —, 166
Reilly —, 117
Rice lake, 4, 5, 14, 21, 24, 74, 98, 168, 170
Richards, Sir William Buell, 237
Rideau Canal xxiv, xxxviii
Ridout, —, 255
Riga, xiii
Rivière du Loup, 216
Robinson, Sir John Beverley, xxix, xxxiii
Robinson, Peter, xxxix, 169, 172
Rochester, 77, 79
Rokeby, 32, 46, 166
Ross, John, 257
Royal Standard, xxxii
Ruttan, Henry, 167, 170
Ryerson, Egerton, 223, 226, 227, 239, 242, 249, 250, 251, 252, 253, 254, 255, 265, 266, 270, 271, 286

St. Albans, 32
St. Catharines xxxix
St. Lawrence river, 60, 216
Sandy lake, 14, 37, 48
Sandy Point, 45
Sawbridge, —, 172
Sawers (Captain), 8, 10, 17, 29, 33, 50, 56, 62, 104, 145, 174
Schenectady, 160
Scott, Adam, xxxix, 128
Scott's Plains. *See* Plains, The
Scugog lake 161
Scugog river, 8, 35, 47, 49, 70, 96, 97, 119
Selby, 45
Sharp (Major), 123
Shaw, —, 168, 169
Shirreff, Patrick, xix, xxviii, xxxviii, xxxix, xl, 146
Simcoe, Lake 13, 14, 19, 74, 129, 131, 154
Smith, Sir Henry, 259
Smith, William, 15
Smith, —, 126
Spence, Robert, 242, 259
Spoke Island 169
Spragge, —, 227
Stewart, Frances xix, xxx, xxxix, xl, 7, 17
Stewart, Thomas Alexander, 6, 7, 160, 164, 176
Strachan, John, xxxiii, 178, 182, 277
Stuart, (Captain), 56
Stuart, Mr. *See* Stewart, Thomas Alexander
Sturgeon lake xv, xxvii, xxxiv, 4, 6, 14, 22, 25, 27, 32, 56, 74, 103, 104, 145, 152, 203
Sturgeon Point, 16, 19, 31, 67, 152
Sully, 21, 167, 168, 169, 170
Sydenham, Lord, 270

Taché, Sir Etienne Pascal, 218, 259, 260
Talbot river 129
Tarbutt, —, 144
Thompson, Samuel, xix, xxx
Toronto, xvi, xxx, xxxi, xxxii, xxxiii, xxxiv, xxxix, 4, 94, 96, 97, 98, 99, 101, 103, 107, 137, 165, 173, 192, 215, 217, 230, 242, 277, 280, 282, 284, 296, 308. *See also* York
Toronto, University of, xvi, xxxiii, 277-297 *passim*
Traill, Catherine Parr, xix, xxvi, xxxv, xxxvi, xxxvii, xxxix, xl
Traill (Lieutenant) xxxv, xxxvi
Trent river, 14, 21, 209
Trent Valley Canal, xxv, 11, 74, 128, 131, 163

Trinity College, 273
Troy 4
Tupper, —, 28

U E Loyalists, xxv xxix, 15, 228
University College 277-297 *passim*
Upper Canada College, xxxiii, 278, 287 288, 295, 296

Uraguadire 125
Uxbridge, 80

Vankoughnet, Philip Michael, 259
Vansittart, Henry xxxiii, 142, 159
Verulam, 4, 19, 22, 25 32 50 63 126, 134
Victoria, County of, xvi, 208

Wade, (Rev Mr), 191, 192 194
Wallace W Stewart, v, xix xxx
Wallis James, 69, 71, 72, 76, 79, 80 95, 134, 138, 164, 165 166, 167, 168, 169 172, 174, 176, 177 178 179 182 188, 189 190, 191, 192
Walsh (General), 69
Wark, —, 113 120 131
Warren (Captain), 60 62
Waterloo, xiv, 164
Welland Canal xxiv, xxxix
West Bay 19
Whitby 94 *See also* Windsor
Wilson, Alexander xxxi
Wilson, Sir Daniel 285 289 290
Wilson, —, 62 69 93
Windsor, 80 181. *See also* Whitby
Woodstock xxxiii, 156
Woolwich 22

York, xxvii xxviii, xxxii, xxxviii, 4, 5 11, 14 28 68, 73 90 98, 119 *See also* Toronto
Young, John, 247
Yverdon, xiv

140

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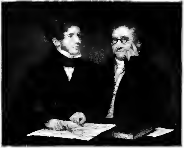

JOHN LANGTON AND HIS PRINCIPAL CORRESPONDENT

From a miniature painted in 1833

EARLY DAYS IN UPPER CANADA

LETTERS OF JOHN LANGTON

from the Backwoods of Upper Canada and the Audit Office of the Province of Canada

EDITED BY W. A. LANGTON

206347 13. 10. 26

TORONTO THE MACMILLAN COMPANY OF
CANADA LIMITED AT ST MARTIN'S HOUSE
1926

From a miniature painted in 1833

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PREFACE

During the first four years after my father came out to Canada he wrote home to his family circle in England a series of letters which form the first part of this collection. These letters were carefully copied by his father, to whom they were chiefly addressed, and were bound in book form. They have thus been preserved in their entirety. The reason for copying them is suggested by the only surviving original letter. At that time letters were sent without envelopes and, as postage was charged by the sheet and was expensive, long letters, like this which survives, were so diligently "crossed" in the writing that they were difficult to read or refer to. When my father's family came to Canada to join him this book of copied letters, comprising the letters from 1833 to 1837, was left behind in England with William Langton the elder brother. He copied from the occasional letters my father continued to write to him portions of special interest, such as the extracts about Lumbering and the Clergy Reserves, but preserved the original manuscript of the letters about university affairs and the audit of the public accounts.

It was not until more than ten years after my father's death that his letters were brought out from their place of preservation and placed in my hands.

The letters concerning university affairs and the public accounts have been published in the Canadian Historical Review and were annotated by Mr. W. Stewart Wallace, the editor of the Review, whose notes have been preserved.

The illustrations of Peterborough and the Back Lakes were made by Anne Langton, after 1837 when she came out from England. The views of Peterborough can hardly have been made before the years 1852-55, during which John Langton and his family lived in Peterborough. They are either exact reproductions of her drawings, though much reduced, or, where the originals were too worn for reproduction, are copies traced from her outlines, which were in ink, and finished in imitation of the originals.

W. A. LANGTON

ILLUSTRATIONS

Thomas Langton and John Langton - - Frontispiece
Thomas Langton and His Family - - - Facing xiv
The Family Party at Blythe in 1840 - - - " xv
Peterborough From the West - - - - - " xxxix
Peterborough From White's Tavern - - - " 5
Alexander McAndrew - - - - - - - " 61
Fenelon Falls With the Mill - - - - - " 72
Peterborough From the South - - - - - " 140
Blythe the Original Settlement - - - - " 159
Blythe at the Present Time - - - - - " 184
View of Blythe, After Addition in 1841 - - " 188
The Church at Fenelon Falls - - - - " 192
View from Blythe, Looking Towards Fenelon Falls - - - - - - - - - - " 200
The House in Peterborough - - - - - - " 213
William Langton - - - - - - - - " 217
John Langton, 1856 - - - - - - - " 277
John Langton Aetat 70 - - - - - - - " 302

S
P
I
M
P

CUTS IN THE TEXT

PAGE
Sketch Map of First Explorations - - - - - - - 13
Plan of Cottage - - - - - - - - - - - 88
Interior Views of Cottage - - - - - - - - 89
Map of the Rapids at Bobcaygeon - - - - - - 173
Plan of Blythe - - - - - - - - - - - 184

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BIOGRAPHICAL SKETCH OF JOHN LANGTON

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BIOGRAPHICAL SKETCH

John Langton, the writer of these letters, was born at Blythe Hall, near Ormskirk, Lancashire, on April 6th, 1808. His father, Thomas Langton, who was a youngest son, was, for his portion, sent to Russia at the age of seventeen, to learn business in an English mercantile house at Riga, on the understanding of a partnership being provided for him on attaining his majority. As he was born in 1770, he cannot have been a partner for more than ten years when, at the beginning of the last century, as Europe was no longer a safe place for Englishmen, he returned to England with sufficient fortune to live comfortably, without active participation in business. The fortune was invested in a partnership with an elder brother in his business in Liverpool. Neither of the partners lived in Liverpool; management of the business was in the hands of a son of the elder brother.

Thomas Langton, having married in 1802 and bought Blythe Hall soon after, devoted himself to farming its lands and teaching his children grammar and Latin. He seems to have been of an inventive, if not speculative, disposition. The emigration later of his youngest son, John, to Canada was probably of his instigation. Allusions in these letters indicate that he burned to have a hand in the contrivance of life in the backwoods; and he finally came out there to live—or, as it turned out, to die.

At this earlier period, when his attention was given to the education of his children, he was so deeply impressed by the system of Pestalozzi that in 1815, when the final defeat of Napoleon opened up Europe again to travel, he decided to take his family to Switzerland to put the education of his children, William, Anne and John, in Pestalozzi's hands. So Blythe was let, and soon after the battle of Waterloo they left England and proceeded in a leisurely manner to Yverdon, where Pestalozzi had his school. There Mr. Langton took a house, and his two elder children were taught at home by tutors from Pestalozzi's Institute, while John, aged eight, went to the Institute. After two years at Yverdon, it was thought that a milder climate was necessary for the eldest son. For the next three years therefore the family lived in the south of France, Italy and Germany; receiving from tutors an ordinary English education, and acquiring also facility in speaking the languages of the countries in which they resided.

In the year 1820 they returned to England, because of anxiety about the conditions of the business in which the family fortune was invested. Whether any one was to blame, or whether it was merely the consequences of the state of the world after the Napoleonic wars, the business was much contracted and was no longer so profitable. In 1826 came a commercial crisis which decided Mr. Langton, for fear of involving his creditors, to wind up the business by private arrangement with them. There was no bankruptcy, but there was henceforth poverty. Had not an aunt come to the rescue, John, who was already entered at Cambridge, could not have continued there. He took his degree in 1829, and after some uncertainty and experiment in Liverpool emigrated to Canada in 1833, when he was twenty-five. His father tried, in more than one way, to restore to some extent his fortunes; but he was of the wrong age, and perhaps not of the right kind. In 1837, after much debate, he joined his son in Canada, with his wife, his daughter Anne, and his wife's sister, Miss Currer. The eldest son, William, who was now manager of Sir Benjamin Heywood's bank at Manchester, remained in England and became a distinguished banker, the creator of the Manchester and Salford Bank.

The following letters give an account of the settlement on Sturgeon Lake, near Fenelon Falls, on land which was afterwards called Blythe Farm. The first series of letters ceased with the arrival in Canada, in 1837, of the persons to whom they had been written.

The family life at Blythe Farm was of course monotonous and of private interest only, but the records show that it was both comfortable and happy; and, in consequence of the necessity of hospitality where there were no inns, Blythe, in spite of its remoteness, was often enlivened by society.

Thomas Langton had died early in 1838. To the family, then consisting of his mother, aunt and sister, John in 1845 added a wife, Lydia, the daughter of the Rev. James Hartley Dunsford of *The Beehive* on Sturgeon Lake. In 1847 his mother and aunt both died, and the tie that held him to the farm was broken. He had been experimenting before this in the square timber lumbering of that time, about which there are some letters included in this collection. Later he invested money in some mills near Peterborough. This took him to Peterborough to live. He became Warden of the county for some years. From 1851 to 1855 he represented in the Legislature, first the united

counties of Peterborough and Victoria, and afterwards the county of Peterborough.

In 1855 he was appointed Auditor of public accounts. This involved a move to Toronto. Soon after arrival there, the Governor General, Sir Edmund Head, appointed him to the Senate of the University of Toronto, and in the following year he was elected Vice-Chancellor.

The Audit Office was new, and its methods and machinery were to be created; hence the interest attaching to the letters about the work which are included in this volume. Addressed to his elder brother, who was by this time a person of large financial and executive experience, they may be regarded as part of the work of creation; a process of arranging and testing ideas by communicating them to a person of judgment in such matters. Confederation, with the accompanying need of co-ordinating the accounts of the provinces, enlarged the field of work. He became then Auditor General and was also the Deputy Minister of Finance. The combined offices he continued to carry on until he was superannuated in 1878. He was then seventy and lived in Toronto for sixteen years longer, dying on March 19, 1894.

UPPER CANADA IN EARLY DAYS

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A SKETCH OF CONDITIONS IN UPPER CANADA WHEN THE WRITER OF THE LETTERS CAME OUT FROM ENGLAND

For the better understanding of the letters which follow, it seems desirable to put together information derived from writers of the period and other sources which will help us to realize what Upper Canada was like in 1833, when John Langton came to the country.

About that time the idea of emigration to Canada had taken hold of young men in England and Scotland. Land ownership was the lure. The Canadian Government had spread its advertisements in the old country offering free land to some and cheap land to all; and land was still the Englishman's idea of property. For a few hundred pounds to own as many acres as his ancestors seemed a great chance to many a young man for whom there was but little chance at home. When the purchase of a few hundred acres of uncleared land was made, the family at home spoke of it as an estate.

It did not take long to convince immigrants of this type that an estate in Upper Canada was not the same sort of thing as an estate in England. Even those who realized that the value of the Canadian estate lay in the future felt little ground for satisfaction, for there was not much promise of prosperity in sight in Upper Canada. The current conditions were crude, and there seemed to be no machinery for improving them. The country was too exclusively agricultural; property consisted mainly of land. There was great need of industries as well; both to make employment for some of the immigrants who were better suited for that kind of life, and also to provide commodities within the country, so that the inhabitants need not buy everything from Great Britain and the United States.[*] Capital was needed to promote such industries, but there was no capital in the country in large amounts, that is to say there were no capitalists; and there were not enough banks to make available for such purposes the reserves of money that immigrants brought with them, which in the aggregate must have amounted to large sums. In the year 1831-32 there were 300,000 sovereigns deposited in the Bank of Upper Canada by new arrivals.[†] This bank, which was then the only bank, was said by William Lyon Mackenzie in an article in his *Colonial Advocate* to be "virtually under the control of the executive;" and in the same article he charges the government with discouraging manufactures, "as interfering with the main object of a colony, to wit, the promotion of the trade, and enlargement of the patronage of the mother country." Whether this charge was true or not, it is a fact, as has been pointed out by Professor Mavor,[‡] that the immediate consequence of responsible government, when it came, was the industrialization of the province. In the meantime commodities were imported; and the specie that for this purpose flowed out of the country into the United States, or flowed out of the province to Montreal and Quebec in payment for British goods, did not return. The only thing Upper Canada had to sell was flour, pork and other produce; of which things the United

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[*] Mavor, *An Economic History of Canada* (ms.)

[†] Magrath, *Authentic Letters from Upper Canada*, p. 128.

[‡] *Op cit*

States had a superabundance and Lower Canada had enough.* Upper Canada was therefore reduced to the primitive condition of exchange by barter; a cumbrous process, which must have made saving difficult or impossible, and was credited by Howison with relaxing the moral fibre of both parties in a transaction. The articles exchanged had not a fixed value like money. The value of a farm labourer's monthly wage of thirteen or fourteen bushels of wheat (the equivalent of £3, the monthly wage of a man)† depended upon the quality of the wheat, and also, no doubt, upon conditions of storage, transport and the character of the farmer from whom it was due. It was the business of the store-keeper to secure his own position by rating the value of the wheat as low as possible, while the labourer's duty to his wife and family required him in self-defence to exaggerate its value. To get the advantage in a barter acquired thus a character of right doing, which caused Howison to despair of the honesty of Canadians. And if in private transactions it was thought no harm to "take advantage," much less was it wrong to cheat the government in the matter of taxes; for these had to be paid in specie which it was not in mortals to command. Even the assessors lost their strictness in the face of an insurmountable difficulty.‡ All this was of course a great hindrance to progress in the country. On the whole the producer suffers most in a system of barter, and agricultural improvements which required the purchase of equipment were indefinitely delayed. The farmer's motto, "Never buy anything, no matter how necessary it is," must have originated at this time.

* Howison, *Sketches of Upper Canada*, p. 127.
† *Ibid.* p. 249.
‡ *Ibid.* p. 236.

As bad a handicap to the farmer, or worse, was the state of the roads. The only available material for making roads, as for everything else, was wood, which did not last long. The roads were soon an alternation of degenerate corduroy and mud-holes up to the axle. If the gaps in the corduroy were less than the diameter of the front wheel, it was possible to go on, by lowering gently each pair of wheels in turn into the gap and pulling them gently out again. If the gaps in the corduroy were too great, there was nothing for it but to fell a tree and fill the gaps—no one travelled without his axe. Sometimes Mrs. Jameson found that the mudholes were made less abysmal by boughs of oak spread over them; which answered the immediate purpose but were apt to prove a trap for those who came after.*

There is no easier way of sinking money in a new country than in making roads and keeping them in repair, and the credit of Canada (then, as Professor Mavor says, "a remote and little known colony") was not strong; but Mackenzie in the *Colonial Advocate* thought something should have been done. "Our roads", he said, "are in general in a wretched condition, and the situation of many of the back settlers so miserable as to render them objects of pity and commiseration in the eyes of any government other than a colonial one." The natural waterways of the country were, of course, a great advantage, and the Welland Canal was already built. The Rideau Canal was also finished in 1831, but its purpose was military rather than commercial. The only other effort then being made in the way of improving the water communication of Upper Canada was the construction of locks at

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* Jameson, *Winter Studies and Summer Rambles*, Vol II, p 119.

Bobcaygeon, mentioned in these letters and interesting as a first instalment of the Trent Valley Canal which, after eighty-four years, we have seen completed in 1918.

Of railways nobody yet thought. It does not seem to have occurred to the writer of these letters or to others at that time, that there was any mode of transport in prospect for Canada better than canals connecting the great lakes. Yet in 1837, four years after his arrival, he writes that Michigan, just made a State, was incurring a debt of $5,000,000 to commence constructing three great railroads from one end of the State to the other. He says, however,—"This system of going ahead seems to have answered in the States, but I doubt whether there is sufficient spirit amongst us to carry the system through."

The contrast with the United States was always in the minds of people in those days. It was only necessary to cross the border into the United States to see bustle and progress in the place of the apparent stagnation of Canada, and it was natural to attribute the difference in the life of the two countries to the difference in the forms of government. Thus, as W. L. Grant says,* "A desire for American institutions grew up—that it did not grow more widely is the remarkable thing." There was, of course, plenty of prejudice against republicanism among the U. E. Loyalists, who had inherited an abhorrence of the United States government; and there was also, quite apart from political feeling, a general dislike of the "Yankees," as they were always called, who had migrated to Canada. These had come over in large numbers. They did not usually take up land. They preferred some occupation in which their hands were nearer the pockets of the public. To keep a store or a tavern suited them best. We can imagine the opportunities afforded to a sharp storekeeper in the bartering period when, as Howison says, with a sympathy somewhat more than generous, "the merchants are obliged to impoverish and oppress the people by exorbitant charges." Of the American tavern-keepers, the testimony of all travellers is the same; as little accommodation as possible was given, and that with the rudest of manners. The truth is that these Americans were adventurers and had the spirit of adventurers rather than of citizens. A travelling American clockmaker, to whom Mrs. Traill complained of the manners of his countrymen, explained the matter by saying that the Americans in Canada "were for the most part persons of no reputation, many of whom had fled to the Canadas to escape from debt or other disgraceful conduct; and added, 'It would be hard if the English were to be judged as a nation by the convicts of Botany Bay.' "*

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* *History of Canada*, p. 194

Such being the character of the "Yankees" in Upper Canada, they served a useful purpose to those who preferred the British character, as warnings that it might be safer to plod on with their country as it was, and hope for improvement. The backwardness of Canada was, as a matter of fact, due chiefly to the form of government; but only one change was needed—an executive which was responsible to the electors—to make the form of government as practical as that of the United States for the development of the country. To do this was really impossible so long as the Colonial Office was considered to be the ultimate authority for all acts of government. The *corpus* of the

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* Traill, *Backwoods of Canada*, p. 293.

Government of Upper Canada* consisted of, first, the Lieutenant Governor, appointed by the Crown, i e, the Colonial Office; secondly an Executive Council of seven, of which three members, the Chief Justice of Upper Canada, the Bishop of Quebec, and the Archdeacon of York, were *ex-officio*, and four were the direct appointment of the Lieutenant Governor; thirdly, a Legislative Council of seventeen members "summoned" by the Lieutenant Governor and his Executive; and, fourthly, a Legislative Assembly of fifty members representing counties and towns.

The Executive Council were only advisers of the Lieutenant Governor, not a cabinet responsible to the representatives of the people; and the Lieutenant Governor was only the local adviser of the Colonial Office. As Lord Durham afterwards said,† the Lieutenant Governor did not even really represent the Crown; he was merely a subordinate of the British executive receiving his orders from the Secretary of State, and responsible to him for his conduct. However, "the Governor", as he is always called in these letters, though but a subordinate of the Colonial Office, was the subordinate on the spot, and, in his own sphere, seems to have been a somewhat that despotic person. His accredited functions gave him much political power in the way of the appointment and control of legislators and the occasions of their meeting, but he exercised also much influence apart from the law. Sir John Colborne, who was the Governor in 1833, was trying to steer settlers towards the lands of the Canada Company. His visit later to the settlement on Sturgeon

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* The Constitutional Act of 1791 is the principal source of information for the following paragraphs on this subject

† Lord Durham's Report

Lake (the settlement with which these letters are chiefly concerned), and his approval of what he saw, raised high hopes in the young men of the lake that he would help their fortunes. They wanted settlers to be sent to their district, and they knew the Governor could send them.

With all these powers and activities the Governor had no deciding power in legislation. An Act to which he had given his assent had still to be approved by the Colonial Office, and two years were allowed for the officials there to make up their mind about it and submit it to the Sovereign with their opinion. When accepted or rejected, the Governor was notified of the result, and proclaimed the Act to be law or nullified it, as the case might be. This was a slow process for a growing country; but those days were slow to an extent that we have difficulty in imagining. There was no means of communication except by mail or messenger, over such roads as we have just been considering. There must have been a certain amount of liveliness along "the front," as the shores of the great lakes were called. Shirreff speaks of steamers, in York harbour, arriving and departing almost hourly*. That, of course, would be only in the summer, and behind the front there was nothing of the kind; life was remote, solitary and slow. The great rebellion of 1837 was begun and finished before it was heard of in Bobcaygeon—now three hours away by train, less by motor, and only a moment by telephone. Two years would not therefore seem to the early settlers of Canada so long as we think it would. Nor did they think in the same way as we should of their position of dependence on the will of the home government. Government by the governed was not an idea of the popular mind; and perhaps it was as well, for not only was the popular mind not very well educated just then—"Mr. B. a native Canadian" told Mrs. Jameson that not one person in seventy, in the back townships, could read or write*—but it was also somewhat disordered in its thinking by arrival in a new country where every man could become a landed proprietor; that is to say, according to the immigrants' old-world ideas, a member of a privileged class. There are numberless stories of the disturbing effect of this supposed sudden rise in the world. Sir John Beverley Robinson, the Chief Justice of Upper Canada at this time, was probably right in his generation in saying† that it was unsafe to trust the government of the country to the unskilled and ill-educated rabble, easily led by demagogues who in those days were republican enthusiasts, and were the more dangerous because, though the majority of the country were loyal to the rather trying home government, they were indifferent to public affairs, and anxious only to attend to their business.

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* *A Tour through North America*, p. 105.

There was a recognizable official class, mainly but not entirely of U. E. Loyalist descent, who were of the same way of thinking as the Chief Justice. They accepted the offices of government as theirs, and with them the emoluments thereof; but they accepted also the duties of office, and one of the duties was to guard the country from less honourable men. Like Sir John Beverley Robinson they feared the multitude. They were the aristocrats but they were not wealthy; and it is to their credit that no accusation has been made of their using the power in their hands to enrich themselves.* This influential circle, as described in narratives of visitors to Canada in the thirties, seems to have practised English social distinctions in an accentuated form,† as if they were afraid of the relaxing influence of a new country. Mrs. Jameson said, "Toronto is like a fourth or fifth rate provincial town, with the pretensions of a capital city."‡ She found there "the worst evils of our old and most artificial social system, with none of its *agrémens*, and none of its advantages."

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* *Op. cit.* I, 34

† Grant, *op. cit.*, p. 185

Her account of Toronto, as it had come to be called shortly before she arrived there, is as it appeared in winter—"Most strangely mean and melancholy. A little ill-built town on low land, at the bottom of a frozen bay, with one very ugly church, without tower or steeple; some government offices, built of staring red brick, in the most tasteless, vulgar style imaginable; and the grey, sullen, wintry lake, and the dark gloom of the pine forest bounding the prospect; such seems Toronto to me now."§ The tall pine forest and sullen lake were visible boundaries: it was a small place. Mrs. Stewart** describes it as "sunk down in a little amphitheatre cut out of the great, bleak forest." Samuel Thompson writing of its dimensions when he arrived there, in September, 1833†† describes it as an oblong bounded by Queen, King, York and Church Streets. South of King Street was the Bay, bordered by trees on a reedy shore and echoing to the sound of the duck-shooter's gun. There was not much movement or life in the streets. There were some good shops, and a market frequented by the smaller householders. People of means, Mrs. Jameson says,* were supplied from their own farms or by arrangement with people they knew or employed. The only market vegetable was potatoes. Beef, mutton and pork were there—not good, Mrs. Jameson says, except the pork which was corn fed. They had, however, fish all the winter as well as in summer; black bass and whitefish, caught through holes in the ice. There were sea salmon in the lakes in those days, as far up as the Falls of Niagara. T. W. Magrath, who lived at Erindale, on the Credit River, about nine miles west of Toronto, caught salmon within twenty yards of his front door, "as fine as I ever met in Ireland, as firm and full of curd as within ten miles of the sea instead of five hundred". Game was always to be had; venison and wild fowl of many kinds; ducks and geese, partridge, snipe and woodcock. Quail were also then caught in immense numbers, near Toronto. The passenger pigeons still came in undiminished numbers. They are mentioned more than once in these letters. They seem to have compared with the locust of the east in destructiveness. Howison records† that in Ohio, where they were more numerous than in Canada, "Wilson, the ornithologist, saw a flock of these birds which extended, he judged, more than a mile in breadth, and continued to pass over his head at the rate of one mile in a minute during four hours, thus making the whole length about 240 miles."

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* Wallace, *The Family Compact* pp 2-8 and 95

† Grant, *op cit*, p 194.

‡ *Op cit* I, 100

§ *Ibid* I, 2

** Stewart *Our Forest Home*, p 13

†† Thompson, *Reminiscences*, p 39

THIS IS ONE MAN'S OPINION

Among the shops were two book shops; one with a circulating library. There would be nothing very new to be found in them, for books published in England took two years to reach Toronto*. People who did read, in those days, were not so much on the look-out for new books as we are. The small fry of literature had hardly made their appearance. It was leviathans like Scott and Byron who wrote the best sellers; and Fenimore Cooper's works (alluded to in these letters) represented the exciting type of novel. A gentleman's library contained chiefly standard works, and probably a bookseller's stock was mostly of this kind. If a Toronto bookseller was asked for a book that was not in stock he always said, according to Mrs. Jameson, "that it could be sent for to Buffalo."† In Buffalo, which had then a population of 20,000, about twice that of Toronto, she found several good bookshops.

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* *Op. cit.*, I, 267.
† *Op. cit.*, p. 175.

For current reading matter there were chiefly the American reprints of English magazines. There were also the newspapers; not containing much news but filled chiefly with paragraphs on subjects of general interest copied from English and American papers, with extracts from books and magazines and a summary of political events.‡ There were about forty newspapers in Upper Canada,§ but there was not much more to be learned from the whole forty than from one, for they had a way of copying from one another the passages which were copied in the first place. The newspapers were mostly weeklies There was no daily paper until, in 1836, the *Royal Standard* was published in Toronto.**

There must have been some leaven of learning in the society of York, because of the presence of King's

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* Jameson, *op cit.* I, 27

† *Ibid.* II, 81.

‡ *Ibid.* I, 271-2.

§ *Ibid* I, 272.

** Grant, *op cit* p. 130.

College and Upper Canada College. The latter is always spoken of with pity by visitors of those days—"it does not appear that much good has yet arisen from it," it had "a system of education which appears narrow and defective"*—but it was staffed by graduates of Oxford and Cambridge. King's College, though its charter dates from 1827, was not active until, in 1843, it became the University of Toronto. The President of King's College was Archdeacon Strachan, an old schoolmaster, and no doubt a man of learning. Mrs. Jameson says that Archdeacon Strachan and Chief Justice Robinson had "very pretty libraries."†

For the greater part of Toronto society, books were probably not so important as other things. We have a record of the conversation at a social gathering.‡ The ladies' topics were:—marriages ~~and births~~, lamentations on want of servants and state of the roads, last letters from England, character of new neighbours come to settle. The gentlemen's topics were:—crops and clearings, lumber, price of wheat, road mending, deer shooting, logburning, etc.; and any man's heart must go out to them with envy. This conversation, it is true, was held at Woodstock not at Toronto; but Woodstock was a stronghold of the well-to-do English immigrants. It was there that Admiral Van Sittart had his house; a log house of many additions, extending over the ground in all directions and looking, it was said, more like an African village than a house; but inside it was full of *objets d'art* from Italy.

Whatever the character of their conversation, people saw much of one another in those days. Even in the backwoods there was constant exercise of hospitality, and little was thought of distance or difficulty. People were known to come to a ball at Government House, Toronto, from distances of fifty, a hundred and even two hundred miles.* The young men on Sturgeon Lake, with whom these letters are concerned, would go down to a ball at Peterborough, over thirty miles away by water, and when they had danced all night, to let the ladies have daylight for their drive home, would row back next day to their farms. The lack of good servants, or of any servants, was made up for by the willingness of the guests to help in the preparations for the feast. The afternoon might be spent in useful occupation; the ladies very busy in the kitchen, while the young men painted a boat before the windows within the range of conversation as well as of sight; and at the proper time all withdrew, to come together again at table, clean, and on special occasions in evening dress.

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* Jameson, *Op. cit* I, 27.

† *Ibid.* I, 271.

‡ *Ibid.* II, 129.

The lack of servants was a serious trouble, perhaps greater in the towns than upon the farms. The daughter of a small settler was often available for domestic service with a richer neighbour, when she was not wanted at home; but such service was apt to be fluctuating. In the towns the persons offering for domestic service were chiefly the lower class of Irish immigrants who, having been accustomed only to want and dirt, were not of much use for producing cleanliness and comfort. The wages at the house of Vice-Chancellor Jameson were $8 a month for the man, $6 for the cook, and $4 for the housemaid; but Mrs. Jameson says that good, experienced servants would get more.† People,

however, emigrated to make their fortunes, not to become domestic servants. Moreover, that condition had more the appearance of servitude in this wonderful new land where people were addressed as "sir" or spoken of as "gentlemen," and where no well dressed person expected less well dressed persons to touch their hats when speaking to him. This equality of consideration, if not actually confused with equality of position, seemed to indicate its near approach and bred disinclination to any kind of domestic service, where the distinction between him that serveth and him that sitteth at meat is well defined.

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* Jameson, *op. cit.* I, 292.

† *Ibid* I, 260

We hear from all travellers of the rude manners adopted by the newly arrived in this free country; by Scots and Irishmen particularly, less so by the English. Howison* tells of two Scotchmen whom he saw in Montreal just after their arrival in Canada, and saw again in Kingston not long after. At Montreal they took off their hats; at Kingston they nodded with easy familiarity. On the latter occasion he addressed them by their Christian names as to their prospect of getting employment. "This gentleman," said one, pointing to his companion who was a bricklayer, "has been offered four shillings a day at Prescott, but his good lady does not like the place." Mrs. Traill has a similar story in her *Backwoods of Canada*.† The exhibit in this case was a young Scotchman, engineer of a steamer, who was "surly and almost insolent" when Lieut. Traill asked him to explain the working of the engine. Instead of doing as he was asked he seated himself on the bench, close beside Mrs. Traill, and explained to her that one of the advantages of this country was that he was not obliged to take off his hat when he spoke to people ("meaning," Mrs. Traill says, "persons of our degree"); and, besides, he could go and take his seat beside any gentleman or lady either, and think himself to the full as good as them. Mrs. Traill suggested that he over-rated the privilege, because he could not oblige the lady or gentleman to share his opinion of himself or to remain seated beside him—which she, rather unkindly, did not. Lieutenant Traill then took up the conversation and, without giving ground, managed to convince the man that he might explain the working of his engine without losing the fruits of emigration. "What makes a gentleman?" said the man in the course of the argument; "I'll thank you to answer me that." "Good manners and good education," was the reply; "A rich man, or a high-born man, if he is rude, ill mannered, and ignorant, is no more a gentleman than yourself." The interest of this story lies almost as much in the Traills' unhesitating confidence of their superiority as in the man's misconception of his position. Oil was oil and water was water in those days; and not only could the two never mix but one lay naturally on top of the other; so naturally that, though social degrees play often an important part in fiction of the period, they do not seem to be noticed by the writers as any more peculiar than that the sun should shine by day and the moon by night. It is, curiously enough, from narratives of life in this country, where the process of emulsification had begun, that we realize best what the old order of things must have been in England.

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* Op. cit., p. 62

† Pp. 83-85.

This exaggerated idea of the privileges of the new country was chiefly noticeable among new-comers. Those who got settled on the land soon found that the

landed proprietor's principal privilege was to be never out of work. We hear no more of them then as theorists. Howison says, "A deliberate inspection of a new settlement sinks man lower in the estimation of the observer than perhaps ever before". There is a general agreement among writers about the squalid appearance of the new settlers' dwellings; and the women writers agree in wondering that there were no flowers about the loghouses. The same people, they said, if they had remained at home, would have had gardens full of flowers. This may be accounted for partly by the way things grow in England, and by the force of habit and local rivalry. These were wanting in the backwoods; but other things were wanting too—seeds, for instance. Yankee seeds, in sealed packets only opened when paid for, were found to contain chaff, empty husks, and worm-eaten seeds.* There is no occasion, however, to go deep in considering the matter. The shanties displayed no care because the occupants had no time or strength for care. A new clearing was a desolate place for the first year or two. It produced no food, and, if the settler had no money, he had to hire himself out to get some in order to maintain his family. There were no animals; for cows, pigs and fowls must eat also. There were some hard years to be got through before a living was assured; but the very poor, for whom the early years were hardest, were those who in the end profited most by emigration. They had usually the sense to see their future and hold on until their farm produced enough to give them a constant round of plain living. With food, warmth and shelter, they had all they could have hoped for in the old world; and independence too. Many went under, chiefly from taking up too much land. It was cheap, about fifteen shillings an acre, and only a quarter of the purchase price must be paid down. The rest was payable in three equal annual payments with interest at six per cent., which might accumulate. When it was allowed to do so, the case, for a man of no capital, was usually hopeless. In three years he could only clear about thirty acres, which, counting out the stumps, did not give more than twenty acres available for crops. A return of ten shillings an acre, i.e., £10 from the farm, was as much as could be expected, and the interest on the debt would be about the same.*

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* Traill, *op. cit.*, p. 179.

Another class of immigrants consisted of persons having a small income, among whom were many half-pay British officers. Their income was not enough for bringing up their families in England in a way they thought proper, but it enabled them to live with considerable comfort on a Canadian farm. They could not make the farm add to their income because of the cost of labour; but, if they had chosen their land well and it rose in value as the country became more settled, they were often able, when the education of their children became an anxiety, to sell with advantage and move into one of the towns.

The small towns of this period had often a pleasant social circle, recruited from this class of immigrants. Most of the principal towns, in the part of Ontario that was then Upper Canada, were by this time in existence. Kingston, though its population was less than 5,000, was in some respects a rival of York. In 1825 it was reckoned the largest town in Upper Canada. It was the naval and military depot at one end of the Rideau Canal, and had a branch of the Bank of Montreal, the

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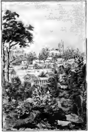
* See Shirreff's account of the settlers' problem, *op. cit.*, p 363.



PETERBOROUGH FROM THE WEST

A water colour by Anne Langton

only bank in the province besides the Bank of Upper Canada at Toronto. Hamilton, as the capital of the Gore district, was flourishing, with a population of 3,000. St. Catharines had salt works and was the place of origin of the Welland Canal. London had a population of only 1,300, when Mrs. Jameson was there in 1836, but it had about 200 houses, a jail and court house, described as "somewhat Gothic," five churches, three or four schools and seven taverns.

The town upon which we must concentrate attention, in an introduction to the letters which follow, is Peterborough. Shirreff, whose *Tour through North America* was published in the very year these letters begin, does not speak of it with much respect. He describes it as "a number of mean houses, scattered over a considerable extent of surface." The population was placed at 1,000 souls, though Shirreff would not have rated it so high. He adds that it was "said to contain a number of military and naval half-pay officers of Britain, and the society to be the most polished and aristocratic in Canada."[*] It was called Peterborough after Mr. Peter Robinson (a brother of the Chief Justice, then Attorney General), who, in 1825, went to Cork and brought out 500 emigrants to settle in Douro, and appears to have stayed by them and acted as their guardian and adviser until they were settled. At this time, Mrs. Stewart says,[†] there was but one inhabitant of Peterborough, Adam Scott, who had a mill on "the Plains;" so the Irish immigrants, who squatted at first on the Plains while their shanties in Douro were being built, were the first population of the place. Yet in 1832, Mrs. Traill,[‡] a year or so earlier

[*] P. 123.

[†] *Op. cit.*, p. 45. She calls him "Walter", probably an error.

[‡] *Op. cit.*, p. 81.

than Shirreff's account, supports him when she says there was "a very genteel society, chiefly composed of officers and their families, besides the professional men and store keepers; many of the latter persons of respectable family and good education"—"The store keeper in Canada," she says, "holds a very different rank from the shopkeeper of the English village. The storekeepers are the merchants and bankers of the places in which they reside." In 1832, the year before these letters begin, there were* "several saw and grist mills, a distillery, fulling mill, two principal inns, besides smaller ones, a number of good stores, a government school house, which also serves for a church, till one more suitable should be built"—which happened in 1836, when St. John's was completed.†

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* *Ibid.*, p. 89

† Stewart, *op. cit.*, p. 94

THE ADVENTURE OF SETTLING

LETTERS OF 1833 AND 1834

[The account of the sea voyage in a sailing ship is interesting, but not a necessary part of a backwoods record. No more perhaps is a description of New York, as it was on July 6th, 1833, but the description is interesting and short.]

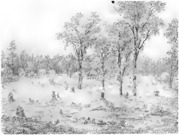
The Bay is certainly very pretty, but nothing like that of Naples to which the Yankees like to compare it. The town—or rather city—is striking from its contrast to any other great seaport I know Very little bustle is seen in the streets, and none of those heavy waggons we are accustomed to at Liverpool The streets all over the town, even those leading to the docks, are lined with trees, which, together with the quietness of the scene, give it more the appearance of a country town in England than the great Emporium of the west. The Broadway, the principal street, leads from the Battery gardens (a pretty walk which occupies the point fronting the harbour) for at least one and a half miles through the center of the town; it is an excellent street, full of very English-looking shops, and is the most busy part of the town, but it is the business of Bond Street, not of Cheapside.

7th Being Sunday, went to one of the Episcopalian churches and might have fancied myself in England again, excepting the perpetual waving, which was kept up all the time, of certain—fans I suppose they are called here, they would be called fire screens in England—which are an inseparable accompaniment of the ladies in this country. I must also except the want of the true orthodox twang in the Clerk.

[The journey from New York was by the Hudson—"a magnificent stream about as like the Rhine as St. Paul's is to Westminster Abbey—but the Yankees, if they hear of anything praiseworthy in another country, must find a counterpart in their own." He went to Troy, a twenty-four hours journey, and thence by the Erie Canal to Oswego. As "the weekly Steamboat had sailed for York" (i.e., Toronto) "that morning" passage was taken by schooner to Cobourg, where steamboats to York were said to be frequent. This accident seems to have governed his fate for he was detained at Cobourg waiting for a steamer and heard there a good account of the district above Peterborough, what we call the Kawarthe Lakes, then known as the Newcastle District.]

I have determined [he says] upon leaving my baggage here, and going up the country myself to Peterborough, the Sturgeon Lake and the township of Verulam before I go on to York. From all I can hear here from residents and land hunters like myself that I have met with, that will be the part of the country most likely to suit me; and as this is the nearest town to those townships, I shall start at four to-morrow and walk to the Rice Lake, whence I can proceed by steam to Peterborough; anything beyond that depends on circumstances. In about ten days I propose being in York.

[From York, on his return from the expedition to Peterborough and beyond, he writes an account of it, the first of a series of letters which form a connected narrative.]



PETERBOROUGH FROM WHITE'S TAVERN

Pencil drawing by Anne Langton

To his Father

York, U.C., Aug. 2, 1833

Having a couple of hours before dinner with nothing particular to do, I have bought a large sheet of paper that my account of my adventures may not unnecessarily fatigue your eyes with the small hand and the crossings which I was obliged to resort to in my two last letters.[*] My last from Cobourg informed you of my journey up the country and my proposed exploring expedition into the Newcastle district; the next morning (22nd July) accordingly I started by the stage or rather waggon, and after jolting over thirteen miles of mud and stumps arrived to dinner on the Rice Lake, which, as its name would denote, is a low, muddy, swampy, aguish looking place, covered over with Canadian rice and other aquatic weeds. From thence I proceeded twenty-five miles by steamer up the Otonabee to Peterborough, where, having gone to the wrong hotel, I occupied one eleventh of seven beds.

The Otonabee (with the accent on the second syllable) is a fine river, winding through the forests, and perfectly navigable up to Peterborough, with the exception of one rapid a little below the town, where even the steamer had to assist herself by warping. The banks are very low, and immediately upon the water (as is the case in Canada universally wherever I have been) not very good; further back however there is no cause for complaint. All the lands have long been taken up and fetch a high price, but there are not more than half a dozen clearings all the way I take shame to myself for having omitted to mention that, at the two principal bends of the river there are two cities, Cambleton* and Howard; the one consisting of a shanty, and the other of a loghouse without windows.

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[*] Letters in those days were charged postage by the sheet. As envelopes were not used, but the paper merely folded and sealed, the number of sheets was distinguishable by the postman. A single sheet of paper, not exceeding an ounce in weight, was charged single postage. A second piece of paper or any other enclosure, however, small, constituted the packet a double letter. But a single sheet of paper, if it at all exceeded an ounce in weight, was charged with four fold postage. As postage was paid by the recipient of the letter, the reasons given for using the large sheet of paper are of the nature of an apology.

The 23rd. I was up early, and walked about the town and neighbourhood, which seems very thriving; indeed, from its being the center of an immense internal navigation, and from its being the only inland town in Canada, its inhabitants would fain believe that it will one day become the capital of the province.

Land in the neighbourhood has become very dear; the last town lot of half an acre sold, fetched £50; and, on the opposite side of the river, one lot of half an acre, being in a beautiful situation for building, sold for £100. All the low land on the banks of the river is reserved by Government, and the trees on it are only thinned, so that the town has not that naked appearance that characterizes the new towns in America. Peterborough would pass for a pretty thriving town even in England. After breakfast I called on Col. Brown, who showed me the lions and introduced me to several gentlemen of the place; in the evening I drank tea there and met ladies for the first time since leaving Liverpool. We walked up to Mr. Stuart's place, a couple of miles up the river He was the first settler in the neighbourhood about twelve years ago, before Peterborough was thought of and when it was two or three hard days journey from Cobourg through the forest. He still lives in the original loghouse, but it is made as comfortable and ornamental as any cottage in England, and he has a fine clearing. It is Mr. Stuart* who wrote that account of his first settlement which you may remember in Basil Hall's America.

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* Campbellford

24th. With my knapsack, a blanket, and some pork and biscuit upon my back, and a bottle of whiskey banging John Gilpin-like at my side, I set off on my travels and walked through six miles of mud holes (for really a road is too good a name for many parts) to Chemong Lake; the old appellation, Mud Lake, having lately been dropped. Here a steamboat is building and will ply upon the lakes in about a month; how her engines were ever transported through the aforesaid mud holes is to me a mystery.† Having borrowed a boat, I proceeded along the Mud Lake, which notwithstanding the nature of its bottom does not deserve the name, and reached the Indian village at its exit at dark; there are several clearings on Chemong Lake. Finding the man I was directed to absent on a hunting excursion, and not being able to get any answer out of the other Indians, I went to the schoolmaster for assistance. He gave me a supper and a clean bed, for which he would receive nothing, and procured me a guide in the person of a handsome and intelligent Indian. And now that I am fairly amongst the savages you will perhaps expect some romantic description; the tomahawk and scalping knife, the chivalrous tuft of hair, the moccasins, the robe, the war paint and barbaric ornaments should all have been detailed to you; but imagine my disappointment at being intro-

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* Mr. Stuart is evidently Thomas Alexander Stewart, the husband of Frances Stewart, whose journals and letters form the book *Our Forest Home*, describing their settlement in Douro Township near Peterborough.

† The writer had not yet become acquainted with the advantages of snow.

√duced to a respectable-looking young man, dressed decently like a Christian in coat, waistcoat and trousers, wearing a checked shirt and neckcloth, and covering his thick black hair with a common straw hat. This person, who owned no long unpronounceable name, but answered to the familiar appellation of Stephen Elliot, agreed to become my conductor for $1 a day; and accordingly, the next morning, the 25th, soon after sunrise, I seated myself on my pack at the bottom of his canoe, in company with two young foxes, and was paddled by Stephen and his stepson, William, up into Pigeon Lake. There are a few settlers on Pigeon Lake, but only one on the part I traversed, though the land is all occupied. On the river which joins Pigeon to Sturgeon Lake is a rapid, by name Bob Cajwin, where the scenery is picturesque, and (what is better) where there are good mill sites which Need* has purchased. Through these rapids a canal is in process of formation which, next spring, will admit the new steamboat upon Sturgeon Lake up to Cameron's Falls,† and up the Scugog River into the township of Ops. A little above Bob Cajwin is Need's clearing where I stopped, but, not finding him in, I returned to Capt. Sawers' at the rapids, where I found him, and about one o'clock made an excellent breakfast upon some venison he had killed that morning. At his shanty I slept, after looking over his clearings and visiting the only other settler, on the opposite side of the lake.

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* He had been given a letter of introduction to Mr. Need. A little book called *Six Years in the Bush*, written by Mr. Need in 1838, while he was in England on a visit, makes sometimes an interesting parallel narrative to that of these letters. In it Mr. Need describes his own settlement on Aug. 9, 1833.

† Now Fenelon Falls.

26th. At nine I embarked again and proceeded along Sturgeon Lake pausing occasionally as I went to look at desirable situations, and, about noon, arrived at Cameron's Falls. The river below the falls winds through precipitous banks on both sides, affording many beautiful views, until, at one turn, you find yourself suddenly within twenty yards of the falls. I apply the term precipitous according to the literal meaning of the word; but the rock is hardly anywhere more than twenty feet high, and would hardly accord with our ideas of lofty precipices. The falls are a Niagara in miniature—just the same shape and with a great body of water, though only twenty-two feet of pitch; it is a very beautiful spot.

Around these falls Mr. Jameson, whom I remember by sight as a young man in Liverpool, has made a large purchase and is very active in bringing out settlers of the poorest sort to occupy his land. I spent an hour or two on the spot where he has some men clearing, but the greater part of the lands about seem very poor, the situation being the principal object.

A little after three I embarked again, and was now beyond the last settlement. On the road I visited an old clearing which has been grown up for the last twenty years, where my guide's father had formerly lived. Whilst I was visiting his father's grave, (for whose sake I hope there were not as many mosquitoes about then as there are now) Stephen contrived to broach my whiskey bottle, without my knowing it; but, by its diminished weight and his noisy commendations of my sobriety, I soon found out the fact. Indeed he shortly appeared to be very near drunk and grew very importunate for more, though much alarmed lest the boy should see him drink and tell his mother (a henpecked Indian!). When he found me firm he turned sulky; the consequence of which was that I could not get him above the rapids into Balsam Lake, and we were obliged to take up our abode for the night in a cedar swamp. Having no axe with us we could not obtain hard wood for our fire, and were obliged to be content with the dead boughs we picked up; but, after we had cooked and eaten our supper, I slept very comfortably upon my bed of cedar branches, notwithstanding the attacks of the mosquitoes.

27th. We were off again soon after daybreak, and breakfasted on a point near the head of Balsam Lake, beyond the boundaries of the surveyed townships. After coasting along the northern shore, as we were crossing to take a look at the surveyed portion below, a storm came on which rendered it almost impossible to get across in that direction, and, as I had already seen enough to judge of the situation, and as the wind was favourable for our return, I resolved to make a great push to reach Need's that night; and, after a severe day's work, with the assistance of the stream and a blanket which we put up as a sail, we arrived there soon after dark, and found that, during our absence, he had built a house. In our return we shot the rapids above Cameron's Falls to within about five yards of the brink; and, after the Indians had got out, Stephen held the end of the canoe from the shore and let me down until, sitting in my canoe above, I could see the water boiling and foaming down below—" a very pokerish looking place" as Stephen observed.

28th. Need and I went to breakfast at Sawers' and about noon I started again and arrived at the Landing on Chemong Lake at sunset. It being near full moon, my desire to sleep in a comfortable bed again induced me to brave the mudholes, and I arrived in Peterborough in safety.

[At Peterborough he waited for a Government sale of lands which did not come off, but, he says, "I made acquaintance in the inn with several gentlemen from whom I obtained much information upon the country." The country was naturally the principal subject of conversation among the land-hunters who met one another at the inn; who were for the most part Englishmen of some education To this must be attributed a knowledge of the country, and familiarity with the procedure necessary in purchasing land, such as one would not expect in letters written so soon after arrival.

The preference for the Newcastle District was based upon its chain of lakes which gave promise of being a great water way; and water was still the only means of conveying goods in large quantity. The land-hunters were therefore using good judgment according to their lights. It would be too much to expect that the writer of these letters, although he had but a short time before been one of the guests carried in the trial trip of the railroad from Liverpool to Manchester, the first working railroad in the world, should connect that experiment with the idea of a railroad running, about twenty years after, from one end to the other of the Canada of those days He would have even less expected that the Trent Valley Canal, which was begun then in parts, and appears to have been projected in its entirety, would not be finished until the year 1918.]

To-day (Aug. 2nd), after looking about the town [York], I waited upon the Governor [Sir John Colborne] and had great difficulty in avoiding giving him a promise to go through the western townships before finally settling, it being his policy at present to send all respectable emigrants there; but, from all I have heard from those who have been there, I do not think they would suit me, and time is too precious to waste in merely looking about me. The great distance of land carriage, the high price of labour and the want of water, more than compensate for the quality of the land; that, I believe, is unquestionably superior to the average of these districts, and it is equally good everywhere; but there is also excellent land on the lakes, though you cannot, as in the west, buy land blindfold with security.

There are several reasons which induce me to give a preference to the Newcastle district. It is the most English of all the districts and the society of a superior caste; lands are to be purchased there cheaper than in any part at an equal distance from a market; there is not that want of water that has caused such great loss in many of the inland townships; instead of being shut up on all sides by the forests, you may obtain a healthy, airy frontage to some of the numerous lakes, which, besides making the situation more pleasant, and, I should think, healthy, enables the settlers to burn,* when in the confined clearings in the heart of the forest there is not a breath of air stirring; mill sites are of course more numerous; labour is cheaper; and, lastly and principally, they have an extent of internal navigation unparalleled in any part of the world, I should think.

I have annexed a diagram of part of the Newcastle district which may give you some idea of the lakes,

which are miserably laid down in all the maps I have seen. Beginning at the top with Balsam Lake, two portages, one of three and the other of seven miles, connect it with Lake Simcoe from the West Bay, and the river to the north is navigable for canoes a long way, through a string of small lakes. Where there is the mark V there is a rapid where *one* lock will join it to Cameron Lake, and just below this the Burnt River is navigable some way, through a rich country. Two locks at Cameron's Falls lead into the North Branch

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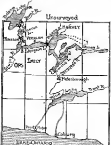
* To burn thoroughly the heaps of green tree trunks accumulated in a chopped clearing was a difficult matter, and to have one side of the clearing open to the draught from a lake was an advantage


Balsam Lake
a
Burnt R.
Unsurveyed
Cameron L.
FENELON
VERULAM
Pigeon L.
HARVEY
Stoney L.
Sturgeon L.
S
Scugog R.
OPS
EMILY
d
Chemong L.
Otonabee R.
Peterborough
Rice Lake
Trent R.
Port Hope
Coburg
LAKE ONTARIO

of Sturgeon Lake; the southern one is navigable through the township of Ops to within forty miles of York. One more lock at Bob Caywin, which is to be completed this fall, leads into Pigeon Lake, the three rivers of which are navigable some way; and on, through Buckhorn, Sandy and Chemong Lakes, the passage is quite open. Six miles land carriage to Peterborough and thirteen to Cobourg lead you to the Ontario. The Trent too is navigable near twenty miles below Rice Lake, and a canal of ten or fifteen more, to avoid the windings and rapids, will continue it on to the Bay of Quinté.

After having seen these beautiful lakes, and rivers abounding in mill sites, who would go to settle in the Governor's present favourite township of Adelaide, where cattle have been driven thirty miles to water and where there is near 100 miles of land carriage to a market—and such land carriage!—or else the produce has to go treble the distance by Lake Huron and the dangerous navigation of Lake Erie; and, after all, unless you are on the Lake shore, you may have as much land carriage as there would be in the Newcastle district from Lake Simcoe to Montreal.

To assist you in following my motions I have marked on the diagram :—

a. Where I breakfasted on Balsam Lake.
b. Where I slept
c. Need's.
d. The Indian village.

The upset price of Government, as you know, is 10/ ; but I am at present partly in treaty for certain U. E. rights, which I can procure at 3/9 to 5/-, and, if I come to any arrangement upon the subject, the cost of my land will be materially diminished. The origin of these rights dates from the Revolutionary—I beg the Yankees' pardon—the War of Independence; when tickets for so many acres were given to the United Empire Loyalists, as they were called, for their services, and to their children afterwards. Thousands of these rights have been bought up and settled, the price in the olden time being somewhere about 5d. or 6d. per acre, and some few yet remain unlocated. The cause of their being so much lower in price than government land is, that, by the grants, they must be settled and ten per cent. cleared in two years, which keeps the speculators in a great measure from purchasing them. A similar condition is annexed to the other lands indeed, but Government is not very strict, except in the case of these rights, against the transfer of which they set their faces as much as possible; to an actual settler, however, such a condition is of no moment.

The mode of location is this:—I go to the Government office, and, upon showing my title, put down the ✓ name of my loyalist upon any unoccupied lot I please; and, upon having fulfilled the conditions, I obtain my patent. The titles consist of the original certificates and two Powers of Attorney; the one authorizing me to locate his right where I please, and the other to sell it or do otherwise with it as I think fit. Sometimes, but not often, a little difficulty occurs in taking out the patents; as in a case at present before the Government. A man located a lot in the name of William Smith; but as it appears that, out of the three William Smiths remaining upon the list, two forfeited their rights in the late war, Government decline giving the patent until it is proved which is the true Simon Pure; which may be somewhat difficult, since all the three

Williams are dead. I am prepared, however, to run the risk, as such cases are very rare, and as it is also customary for the seller to enter into a bond to bear you harmless in case of the patent not being given, and my man is a very substantial and respectable man in the Province. Still I am not certain yet whether we shall agree about price, etc; the difficulty lying in the legal documents and who is to bear the expense of them. I shall not, I think, make any purchase at the next sale; but I will attend it, at any rate, to see how things are going. Immediately after the sale I mean to proceed up the Lakes again, to inspect some of the situations more minutely; which I shall be able to do now, as I have taken a copy of the government surveys, by which, with the assistance of a compass, I can find out exactly what lot I am upon—a very difficult matter before; and, as I shall pass through York before the next sale, and shall there get permission to look over the surveyor's field notes, I shall be more prepared with knowledge of the nature of the land I am buying than I can be now.

APPENDIX TO THE LETTER OF AUGUST 2ND DATED AUGUST 23RD

I must apologize *in limine* for the wide interval between my two dates, but the fact is, that expecting soon to return, I left this letter in my trunk at Cobourg and have only rejoined it yesterday.

I did not make any purchase at the sale of the 6th inst, though there was no opposition to most of the bidders, and my plan of going up the lakes was delayed partly by the weather and partly by the prolonged absence of a certain Quaker, by name Hunter, who had agreed to accompany me—so we did not set out until the 16th. In the meantime I employed myself in excursions into the country round about [Peterborough apparently], and in assisting my late Westmoreland fellow traveller* to find a cleared farm; and, when the rain confined me to the house, in reading certain French, German and Greek books which belonged to a young man of Dublin University.

On the 16th, Mr. Hunter and I with a Mr. McAndrew set off and walked eleven miles to the bottom of Chemong Lake where we borrowed a boat across to the Indian village. No guide, however, was to be procured, but we at last induced James MeQue,† a halfbreed, the interpreter of the tribe, to take us up to his father's, about five miles further; but here the whole family were out hunting, so we finally agreed to borrow his canoe and paddle ourselves. I was the only one who had ever been in a canoe I believe, certainly the only one who had ever paddled, so I took the steering department, and with one or other of my companions in front we reached Bob Cajwin at sunset. On Pigeon Lake we had to work up against a high wind, and, as keeping a canoe steady even in a calm is no easy matter, I can assure you it was hard work. We slept at Sawers' whom we had met going down to Peterborough, and slept very comfortably upon his floor. 17th. We paddled across the lake to Darcos's, of whom we borrowed a boat, which, as it had a sail and as McAndrew and I are both pretty good hands at an oar, was a more comfortable mode of conveyance; thence we crossed to Need's and borrowed an axe, and about ten set off up the Lake.

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* A fellow traveller on the ship coming out.

† This name is spelt in these letters both McQue and McGue. The uncertainty may have been with the copyist. The writer, however, in a note on these lakes, written many years later, spelt the name McCue. Mrs. Stewart, in *Our Forest Home*" speaks of Billy McKue. It is possible that the half-breed family did not spell their name at all, but caught it by ear from their white progenitor, and his name may have been the more usual one McHugh.

The first place we made for was *f* [a place Need wished them to "locate"], but notwithstanding my compass and maps, I believe we found the wrong place; however, in a mile's incursion back into the woods, we found nothing worth looking at.

We found it almost impossible to ascertain our exact position, for the blazes which denote the lines of the lots and concessions are obliterated by time—if they were ever properly marked. We landed again to dinner just round Sturgeon Point, at a spring which the Indians had shewn me, and then crossed the Lake to where the word Fenelon is written, where Mr. Hunter has some land which he wished to look at. Here we spent an hour or two in the woods, and then made a hard push for Cameron's Falls. After having ascertained that the falls were even more beautiful than before, I conducted my companions to the shanty through the woods, which we found deserted; however we took possession, and after considerable rummaging discovered a barrel of pork and of flour and a frying pan, in which we baked a cake; having spread a bed of cedar boughs we retired to rest, and I for one knew nothing of the miseries of this wicked world till the sun had been long risen.

18th. By nine we had breakfasted, taken a look at the beauties of the place, and joined our boat again below the falls. We first landed on our return at *e*, where Mr. Hunter and I made a long excursion back and found some excellent land, rising considerably though gently back from the lake, and moreover discovered the mouth of a creek which even at this season had plenty of water. This I determined to buy. We then crossed over to his land, followed up a creek there for about a mile through indifferent land, and having dined again at our spring and landed at what we believe to be the real *f*, we reached Need's to sleep, and *next day* proceeded on to Peterborough. Tuesday the 30th was the sale at which Mr. McAndrew, who will be a pleasant neighbour, bought land at *g* opposite Sturgeon Point, and I bought about 300 acres where the dotted lines are at *e*, including the creek, which McDonell, the agent at Peterborough, who knows the country well, tells me has a fall of 20 feet, a good mill site. This I certainly did not see myself, but, from the high land behind and the body of water in the creek, there must be something of the kind, though perhaps not convertible to much use for a mill, where Cameron's Falls are so near. For one lot of 115 acres containing the creek I was bid up to 14/-, the other two of 126 and about 40 or 50 acres I got at 10/-. Besides this I have bought two U. E. rights of 200 acres each at 3/9; one of which I have resold at a profit of £12 10, and the other I have located immediately adjoining my other land but in the township of Verulam. If B— [a friend, who came out on the same ship], from whom I have never heard, proposes to settle beside me, he can get a lot on my south ....

Now for my future plans. I am now on my road to York to pay my instalments, thence I go to Lake Simcoe to learn what B— is about, and I expect to be in Peterborough before the 2nd September. I shall then contract to have ten or fifteen acres cleared and ready for the crop in the spring and make another contract for a house to be built before winter and shall

immediately go up and take possession. I mean to do all by contract, keeping no labourer of my own till spring, the wife of one of the contractors or their men will be sufficient to cook and wash for me, and my own time will be fully taken up in superintending the workmen, surveying the capabilities of my land, and making the interior of my house comfortable after it is built, and beautifying the outside with something of a garden. The clearing, I expect, will cost me about twelve to fifteen dollars an acre; probably not more than the first sum, as a good deal of it will be paid in pork and flour. As to the house I cannot say what it will be as I hear so many opinions, and indeed have not yet finally settled its nature and dimensions. No two people give the same advice. Some say a shanty is good enough; others talk of log, frame, stone and brick houses. Franklins, cooking and common stoves, and chimneys of different constructions, have each their advocates. I incline myself to the regular routine; a wigwam the first week; a shanty till the log-house is up; and the frame, brick or stone house half a dozen years hence, when I have a good clearing and can see which will be the best situation.

A Letter to a Friend

Cobourg, Aug. 23, 1833

In conformity with my promise of writing to you as soon as I had fixed on the spot where I am to spend my life, I seize the first vacant moment since my purchase to inform you that on Tuesday last, the 20th Aug., between the hours of eleven and twelve, I became, for the first time in my life, a Lord of the soil.

Now look at the map of Upper Canada. Do you see the Bay of Quinté, upon which Kingston is situated? Well—the river Trent runs into this bay as you will see, and, if you will take the trouble to follow it up for some twenty or thirty miles (which you must do on foot, for it is not navigable), you may then get into a boat and sail up into the Rice Lake. You will admire it very much for the beauty of its banks and islands, though at this season of the year the wild rice beds give the lake itself more the appearance of a grass plot than a sheet of water, but I would not advise you to stay long admiring the scenery or you will probably catch the ague; but go at once to the town of Sully (where you will find one house), whence you may take a steamer which will carry you twenty-five miles up the river Otonabee to Peterborough.

After the specimen of Canadian towns which you will have seen at Sully and at two others on the river—Howard containing a shanty, and Cambleton* a log-house without windows—you will be surprised to find Peterborough a very pretty, picturesque, thriving village, with about 2,000 inhabitants and near thirty genteel families within visiting distance; but you will be more surprised to find that in 1825 scarcely a dozen white men had ever trodden the woods where it stands.

From hence you may continue to ascend the river and will enter some very beautiful lakes; but, as the Otonabee is scarcely navigable for canoes above the town, I would recommend you to turn your face towards the N N W., and walk six miles till you reach the Chemong or Mud Lake at Bridgenorth (Population 1). This individual will lend you a boat which you may row five miles north to the Indian village.

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* See *ante* p. 6 (note).

Of course one so well acquainted with Uncas, Chingachgook, Magua, etc., knows what to expect in his Indian guide; but, nevertheless, you will be surprised again, upon being introduced to Stephen Elliot, James McQue, Joe Bullfrog, Joe Muskrat or any other of the fraternity, to behold a handsome young man with long black hair, dressed respectably in hat, shirt, coat, waistcoat and trousers, and with all the other outward and visible signs of a Christian man. Even my most respectable friend Capt. Nogy, the chief, I will engage shall not at all remind you of the great Sagamore of the Mohicans. They are all a most peaceable, sober set of men; I doubt if any of them ever saw human blood, except old Bedford who killed his wife, but that, as he says in excuse, was a long time since. I cannot, however, say as much for their industry; some of them would sooner fast twenty-four hours than take the trouble to cook a meal. All this and more you will have had time to observe before any of the aforesaid gentlemen will have made up their minds whether they will take you up or not.

However I will suppose you in a canoe, moving lazily up into Pigeon Lake, and thence, through the rapids called Bob Cajwin, into Sturgeon Lake. I forgot to say that at the rapids you passed the town of Verulam (Population 0), but on the Lake you will find six settlers. Certainly this is not many, but then four of them have been at an University, one at the military college at Woolwich, and the sixth, though boasting no such honours, has half a dozen silver spoons and a wife who plays the guitar.

Now look at the map again. You will observe that the Sturgeon Lake runs east and west for about ten miles and that it then divides into two branches; the one running south leading into a settled township called Ops, the other leading north towards Cameron Lake Up this last you will please to sail along the eastern coast for about two miles, when you will see a stony beach lined with cedar, hemlock, birch and pine, and immediately behind that the brighter foliage of the oak, maple and basswood. If you look very narrowly at this shore, in about a month, you will see a very small clearing, and near a brook you will perceive a wigwam composed of birch bark and cedar boughs. Pray step on shore and walk in; you will find an old friend who can at any rate promise you some salt pork and unleavened bread, with a cigar and a glass of whiskey; and it is more than probable that a fine bass or maskinonge, fresh from the Lake, or a couple of wood ducks, as fat as ortolans, may be added to the repast; who knows whether a haunch of venison or a sirloin of bear may not be forthcoming A fire before the entrance of the wigwam will serve the treble purpose of giving warmth, light to eat your supper, and of keeping off the mosquitoes, and a bed of cedar boughs, with a buffalo robe for a covering, you will find no despicable lodging This and a welcome is all I can offer you; but in the morning I will lead you through the woods to see all the wonders of my estate. You shall behold a swamp, into which however you cannot penetrate till the frost gives you firm footing; you shall see a beautiful hill gently sloping down to the lake and from which there is a beautiful view —if the trees were out of the way—and where a mansion will some day stand; and a brook—or creek as we call it—which will be the site of a mill Then I will take you to an old settlement of the Mohawks, who were massacred about fifty years ago by the fathers of your respectable friends Joe Muskrat, Joe Bullfrog, etc. After this I will paddle you in my canoe to Cameron Falls, about six miles off, where you may see Niagara in miniature; the fall is only twenty-two feet high, but the body of water is very great and the shape exactly that of Niagara.

Here, before winter, you may meet another Liverpool acquaintance. I don't know whether you knew a tall, short-sighted Irishman by the name of Jameson, who used to pull in one of the boats* I remember him by sight only. He has made a very large speculation in land here, amongst the rest the lot in which the Falls are situated, and proposes building mills there

Beyond this all is wilderness, though the speculators have bought a good deal of land. Jameson, if he comes to settle this winter, will be both my nearest and my last neighbour. At present, I am the pioneer of the township, for, though Jameson has begun a clearing, it is deserted again, and I fear I shall have no one there till spring. But, as soon as the ice breaks up in the spring, a steamboat will pass my door, and who shall say that I am then beyond the precincts of civilization?

When this steamer, which will be finished next week, can get through the locks now building at Bob Cajwin, I shall have only six miles of land carriage to Peterborough, and thirteen from the Rice Lake to Cobourg, to bring me upon Lake Ontario. I shall then be in *uninterrupted* water communication with upwards of 150 miles of coast, along these back lakes and rivers. Yet, with all these advantages, I get a block of excellent land, with half a mile frontage to the lake, and with a mill site* upon it, at a price averaging 8/- an acre. Land which has far less advantages is now selling at £5 an acre; the very mill site alone, if near Peterborough, would sell for much, much more than I gave for all the land. *If* it was near Peterborough, you will say—but, I answer, land near Peterborough might, three years ago, have been bought at even a less price; and why should not land on Sturgeon Lake increase in value as well as on the Otonabee Good land, in good situation, is now getting very scarce; and, when the new lands are all bought up, the old ones must rise rapidly in price

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* At Cambridge

All these speculations as to the rise of land are *entre nous*, though I am convinced of the eligibility of my situation, I will not talk of it till it comes to pass; but bear in mind that the 16th lot in the Xth, the 16th and 17th in the XIth concessions of Fenelon, and the 17th in the Ist of Verulam, containing 500 acres, more or less, only cost £200, and ask five years hence what they are worth.

I don't know of anything else that would prove very interesting to you from this quarter of the globe, lots and concessions being the only subject of conversation here.

To his Mother

Peterborough, Sept 12, 1833

So soon after the date of my last I do not know whether I should have written again if three circumstances had not combined to induce me to such a step.

First, that before the end of next week I shall be a dweller in the woods, and consequently, as chairs and tables are scarce articles there, I may not have conveniences for writing a letter for a month to come; secondly, that I yesterday received a letter from you, and lastly, that at this hour of half past ten, I find myself sitting by the fire with nothing to do, and I know, from dire experience, that, unless I sit up till one or two to get very, very sleepy, the fleas will have commenced their attacks before I get fairly asleep and then there will be little rest for me, for when once they begin they come on in such armies, that even in the dark I have caught a dozen or two in the course of the night.

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* Water was still the available source of power.

[The letter describes how, after finding that his friend B— was settled, the remaining days of August were consumed at York in waiting on the slow process of getting his "papers" for the land he had purchased. The time was partly filled in by a visit to Niagara by means of] a steamer which, after coasting to the head of the Lake and landing us for two or three hours at the pretty village of Hamilton, reached the town of Niagara at nine o'clock, whence a stage carried us to the Falls, where we arrived at midnight. The inn was completely full and it was with difficulty I could obtain permission to sleep on the floor. At five o'clock I was up and walked down to the Tablerock, etc. [Pleasure seeking was laborious even then, when people were not in a hurry. We need not follow him about the Falls, though the description with which he "paid the forfeit of having seen Niagara" as it was then, has some historical interest. It was September 3rd before he got back to Peterborough.]

Arrived at Peterborough I commenced enquiries for choppers, but, as no decent men could be found, I was advised to wait a week till the harvest was fairly over

and the poor settlers were ready to leave their farms for a winter's job. Accordingly I set out with my former companion McAndrew for Sturgeon Lake, intending to spend the time usefully in looking at our land again and fixing upon the points for building our houses and commencing our clearings.

September 5th. Having got my papers prepared, I sent them off to York and started for the Mud Lake which we reached just in time for our new steamer's first trip. Of course, on a lake on which nothing but Indian canoes had been heretofore seen, we could not expect a magnificent steamboat, but I must confess I was considerably disappointed with her working. She is built like a scow, that is, to be more intelligible to you, very much after the shape of a wash tub, a small draught being the principal object. Her accommodations for passengers are by no means bad; she carries sixty tons of goods and can go at six or seven knots an hour. All this sounds very well, but unfortunately her steam is exhausted directly, and I am afraid she will never do much good till she gets new boilers. However this was the first trip and we laboured under many disadvantages. The water is just at the lowest point and the Captain hardly knows the best channels; owing to which circumstances we stuck in the mud for an hour, during which we broke our pump and had therefore to stop every now and then, for near an hour, to pump the boilers full again by hand; add to which that our wood was quite green, and, until we stopped to cut down a few cedars the second day, we never had a decent fire, and consequently had to stop an hour or so sometimes to wait for more steam.

As we approached the Indian village there was a curious scene; every living soul turned out upon the shore, shouting "Shemong, Shemong" (canoe), and receiving us with repeated discharges of firearms, which we returned with three cheers and as good a salute as we could muster. We stopped here awhile and the Indians were invited on board, to the number of about thirty men and half a dozen squaws. Mr Tupper, formerly an Indian trader, now a storekeeper in Peterborough, was fortunately on board and acted as master of ceremonies. He is a nice little man and a great favourite among the Indians, who call him "Shosh," which, being interpreted, I found, to my astonishment, means "a little bird passing rapidly between you and the sun;" by which is meant that he is what the Yankees call "pretty considerable spry." About three dozen wine glasses were produced and handed to each, according to his rank, with some appropriate speech, but, as we only had about half a bottle of port on board, the quantity was increased and the quality not deteriorated by the admixture of a bottle and half of brandy. I was introduced in great form to Nogy and Bill Crane, the two chiefs, and then they were taken to view the wonders of the engine room. With all our guests on board we proceeded on our journey into Buckhorn—Lake shall I call it?—Swamp were a better word,—where we were to pass the night and discharge some of our passengers. As many of the Indians as their canoes would carry left us here, but a considerable number, with the squaws, encamped on shore; with whom I spent an hour or two, watching their proceedings. It was a curious scene. The night was beautiful though frosty, and the Aurora formed a bright arch across the zenith, the northern

part filled with streamers, changing their lines and forms every moment, and underneath, round a blazing fire, sat about twenty Indians, the men lounging about, some dozing, some smoking, whilst the squaws were engaged in washing potatoes and putting them into a huge boiler, or twisting and tearing off lumps of venison which were added to the mess.

In the morning I bought a canoe and amused myself, for three or four hours, in paddling amongst the numerous low islands, until about ten o'clock the steamer was ready to start; but, though the distance is not much more than twelve miles, we did not reach Bob Cajwin till dark;—or rather, as it should be called, Bob-cajion-unk, though it generally goes by the former name or the familiar appellation of Bob.

7th. Early in the morning McAndrew and I borrowed Capt. Sawers' boat and performed a pretty hard day's work, rowing upwards of thirty-five miles and scrambling through the bush not far short of ten; but what made it worse was that from half past five to nine o'clock in the evening we had nothing to eat but two small biscuits, one for tea and the other for dinner. To this sad fare we were reduced by Capt. Sawers who obstinately refused to give us any pork or flour or even to lend us a pot in which to boil some potatoes we had begged,—to punish us, as he said, for coming unprepared from such a land of plenty as Peterborough to sponge upon the poor backwoodsman at Bob. We first landed at the mouth of my creek and pushed on, along its course, for about a mile, through an almost impassable cedar swamp,—not so much impassable from the wet as from the thousands of trees which encumber the ground in every direction, sometimes five or six deep, in every stage of decay.

To you, I dare say, a swamp conveys no very pleasant ideas, but I look upon that bit of land as the best I have; in the first place the cedars (though not red cedar) are very valuable for posts, rails and sundry other purposes; there is at least a foot of vegetable matter at the top and a good alluvial soil at the bottom, and there cannot be any difficulty in draining it. If the creek were cleared from the decayed trees, which choke it up everywhere, the fall is such that it would drain the land without any further expense; and this will not be difficult, for, if a cedar swamp is well chopped and the fire put in at a good time, it will not leave a particle of inflammable matter behind; indeed it only burns up too much. The cedar stumps, it is true, will not rot out in two or three generations, but, if fire is put into them in a year or two, they will burn down below the surface and leave you perfectly clear meadow land, though certainly ill adapted to the plough; and for the former purpose such land is for other reasons the most proper, as in spring and autumn it will be liable to flood.

We next landed at a pretty point, attracted by the sandy beach, which is rather a rare thing along these lakes, and found excellent land close down to the shore; but what pleased me better, we stumbled upon a brook, running merrily over a gravelly bottom, the mouth of which is imperceptible from the lake. Where it comes from and whether it may not be another mouth of the former one I cannot tell, for the ground was covered with a kind of nettle, growing very high, which, though not so painful as our English nettle, made nothing of stinging through our trousers. Near this is to be my shanty, there being every advantage; dry and good

land, excellent water, a sandy beach for my canoe, and a fine open view down the lake.

My land at any rate is well watered, for, besides the two larger streams, on my former journey I discovered a small one, which may indeed be the same as this last, but, where I crossed it, it was running in an opposite direction; but in my next letter I shall be able to give you a better account of the topography of my land.

Again we landed and went back on another part where there is a hill, which will undoubtedly be the situation for a house, some dozen years hence, if matters prosper with me. But now comes the worst of the business. In surveying a township the surveyor only marks the boundary lines and the concession lines, which in Fenelon run north and south; and, as my shore runs in the same direction, of course my boundaries are the side lines, which are merely imaginary lines which none but a surveyor can find; so that I am in the most pleasing uncertainty whether any of these three points is in my land. By guessing at the distance from Sturgeon Point and Cameron's Falls, and by the bearing of a creek on the opposite side of the lake, I thought that I could find my front, which is a mile in extent, and my creek I considered an infallible guide; but since I have found two where only one is marked, I begin to doubt whether the cedar swamp is not to the north of me. Again, if that is really my creek, the hill is so near my other boundary that I dare not begin clearing there; and as for the other creek,—I yesterday found out a nasty little broken front of ten or twelve acres, barely perceptible on the map, which comes exactly in the middle of my frontages and which I vehemently suspect to be the identical spot where the creek falls into the lake. This however I will buy on Tuesday, at all costs, and then I think I may be certain of being on my own land.

After leaving my part of the lake, we crossed to search for McAndrew's land; but, after a three hours' search, we could not even find the boundary of the two townships, such is the uncertainty in which we poor pioneers are left. I have since seen the surveyor of Verulam, who will be up there next week, and has promised to mark the boundary. This will set McAndrew at ease, but, as to me, the running of my lines will be a tedious and, I am afraid, an expensive job, and at any rate he has not time to do it now, being engaged to lay out the town at Bob-cajiou-unk, which is to be called St. Albans.*

After toiling through the woods in all directions in search of a blaze; tired, hungry and mosquito-bitten, McAndrew and I sat down in despair under a cedar, woefully contemplating a ten mile row home against a confounded wind which had sprung up right in our teeth, and, by way of getting home the faster, both most unintentionally fell fast asleep; the consequence of which was that we had to go down the rapids in the dark, which we accomplished without touching a rock, a thing by the bye which I never yet could do by daylight.

The next morning (the 8th) we took the precaution of getting a good breakfast before starting and of begging a slice of bread of one of the workmen, and, it being Sunday, we took two of Sawers' men to help us to pull up on a second blaze hunt; but devil a bit of anything could we find, though, in a long push back through the woods, we must have crossed the line several times. We found out its situation, however, within a hundred yards or so, from the bearings of the opposite shore, so that McAndrew has the pleasure of knowing that, if his house is not on his own land, it is at any rate not more than twenty or thirty yards on his neighbour's.

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* The survey, as Mr Need notes in *Six Years in the Bush*, took place a month later, on Oct 6th, but the place was not called St Albans. The village was laid out, apparently by the Government, in connection with the work of connecting Sturgeon and Pigeon Lakes by a canal. In the following year, on July 16th, 1834, when the Lieutenant-Governor came up to view the works, he named the settlement Rokeby, the name still commonly used for that part of the village of Bobcaygeon

Next morning, the 9th, we arranged to return with Athill (one of our settlers) in his canoe, and were to start at six o'clock; but as he very kindly got up at five, and was a mile on his road when we went into his room to call him, we were left once more in the lurch. However we found a workman, more hospitable than his master, who gave us a breakfast, and another who lent us a leaky canoe in which we embarked, leaving our friends to enjoy their joke, and having at least gained this much experience,—that no one should trust to friends, in the woods, for such indispensable articles as provisions and a canoe.

As we carried an extra cargo of a hundred weight of water,—of course the wind was in our teeth,—what with that and stopping to bale from time to time, we were five good hours up to our knees in water in paddling eight miles to McQue's, where we succeeded in getting his son to take us down in a dry canoe. But, as fate would have it, when we had a prospect of dry feet, the rain commenced, and lasted till we reached Peterborough at dark. The sole subject of our conversation for the last mile was the pleasures of a hot supper and a bottle of ale Alas! on our arrival the ale was finished and a cold fowl all the eatables in the house, to a leg of which we had just helped ourselves, when a hungry Yorkshireman entered and most unceremoniously transferred the remainder to his plate. However some bread and butter and a bottle of mulled wine put us in spirits again, and we retired to bed to wish ourselves back in the woods, where at any rate there are no fleas.

Ever since I have been here I have as yet secured no choppers but expect to do so to-morrow. My provisions and other necessaries are all ready and for stock to my farm I have procured a kitten and am looking out for a goat for milk during winter. On Wednesday, *Deo volente*, I mean to sleep at Need's, and on Thursday (19th Sept.) under a cedar on my own land. For the present I must give up my pen hoping to get to sleep soon enough to cheat the fleas, if my cold feet will allow me, for my fire has been long out and the nights are already getting abominably frosty.

To his Father

Peterborough, Oct. 31, 1833

I am much obliged to you for the fishing tackle I fear that much of it will be of little use to me upon our lakes, neither salmon nor trout making their appearance so high up; but the lines at any rate will be useful to me, and the rest perhaps to fishers on the lower lakes.

Our fish are the bass, the maskinonge—a most excellent species of pike, as fat almost as an eel—and the eel itself; the sunfish I believe we have, but I have never seen nor tasted any; the whitefish abound above and salmon trout below. The bass is our staple commodity, and a most excellent one it is; if you are on the lake, tie a line, baited with a piece of red cloth, round your wrist and proceed on your journey, and it is ten to one that, before you have got a quarter of a mile, you will feel your prize. In some parts of the lake, if you are short of meat for dinner, you may put the potatoes on to boil and, before they are done enough, you may have ten or twenty bass on the gridiron. Maskinonge and eel are generally speared, a very difficult matter till one has studied the laws of refraction a little. I have bought some seine twine and mean to net a net this winter which I expect will supply me pretty well with fish next summer; and I do not know whether it may not be worth while to take up an old pork barrel with the brine to Lake Kinashgingiquash, some vacant week in the summer, and bring back a cargo of whitefish, which, salted in that manner, are almost as good as herrings. At any rate I cannot afford salt pork at present prices; I am selling it to my choppers at £4-12-6 p. barrel of 200 lb., and I do not make a half-penny by it.

For game—we have abundance of venison, which is becoming more plentiful as the clearings increase, affording them more food and driving off the wolves; you may buy it of the Indians at 1½d. p. lb., and sometimes for less. Partridge and rabbits are pretty plentiful, but the former difficult to get without a dog. Ducks, in thousands and tens of thousands, frequent the rice beds at the mouth of the Scugog, about four or five miles from me. These, together with a bear, two wolves, martens, racoons, muskrats and squirrels, are my only acquaintances as yet . . .

In a fortnight or so I hope to send you a parcel myself, by some private hand, in return for yours; its principal contents will be some maps of the Newcastle

district which I am publishing, partly with a view to profit and partly to benefit the district. I am pretty certain not to lose and expect to make a profit of £10 or £15; at any rate I have the merit of setting a good example, for as soon as my map was in the press government gave orders for similar maps of all the districts to be published. The plan is to have all the townships marked and the lines of the lots indicated. Such maps of each district are to be seen at the Surveyor's office upon payment of 1/3, so you may suppose that the clerks, to whom the fee comes, throw every imaginable impediment in the way, and they at first refused to give my printer the copies, even when he shewed them the positive order of the Governor to that effect.

I believe I have now fully answered your letters and may go on with my journal from somewhere about the 12th September.

I believe I added, as I was leaving Peterborough, that I had been detained by the expected arrival of the Governor. Indeed the whole town was in as great a ferment as if His Majesty himself had been expected. Militia men turned out and the guard mounted before a loghouse, dignified with the name of Government House. By the bye, the said house is so full of bugs that they dared not invite his Excellency to sleep in it and had rigged up a tent near it, under which his bed was prepared. However, as I said before, Col. Brown and his men were parading about for two days, and one whole day was spent by nearly half the town in erecting a flagstaff. The second day it was considered certain he would come, and we all, except one or two cunning ones, put on our clean shirts, etc. Troopers were galloping about in all directions, watching all the avenues by which the enemy might approach; and a man was stationed on an elevated point, with orders to keep his eyes fixed on the bridge and to fire a shot the moment the great man crossed it. At last, about noon, every thing was ready; the colonel had drawn out his forces so as to make the best possible show, the dozen who had uniforms being posted in conspicuous situations, and a reserve of ragged Irishmen being drawn up behind the cow house to fire a salute. And, after all, they ended by saluting our parson, or rather his horse; for the reverend gentleman, finding the animal which had been sent forward to bear the honoured weight of the Governor, mounted him and rode forward with the news that he was not coming at all. Some of the officers, who had their uniforms on, were very indignant; those who had made everything ready to slip them on at a moment's warning laughed; but as for our worthy little Colonel—for a full minute it was doubtful whether he would not cry. Mr. McDonell, the government agent, bore it with the greatest philosophy,—he merely observed, "Well, well, then we'll eat the little pig ourselves." Nevertheless it was no small inconvenience to me, for the boat was stopped to carry the Governor up our Lakes, and I could not get off by it after all, for the captain, when he found he had been made a fool of for three or four days, set off in a pet, without giving anybody notice.

Finding I could not get it till Monday the 23rd, I sent enough luggage, to serve for my first settlement, to go on that day, and took that opportunity of going up to Sandy Lake on Saturday the 21st, with a Mr. Mudge of the Navy, who is settled there, and with a Lieut. Hay, R.N., who was on the lookout for land.

The greater part of the day (Sunday, the 22nd) Mudge did the honours of his lake, and in the evening we walked across to little Bald Lake. Both of these are very beautiful, but, notwithstanding their greater vicinity to Peterborough, I do not like them as well as my own situation, the land being not so good and they being out of the chain of lakes. The next day they and I walked over to Buckhorn Lake, where we met two Indians by appointment who took us down to Deer Bay or rather Lake where we landed and went back in several places; the scenery is the most beautiful I have seen and the land the worst,—I am afraid they are two things which do not go together.

We had expected to be in time to catch the steamer in Buckhorn Lake, but, in consequence of a deer hunt which kept us some time, we were too late, and had to sleep at a house there. The next morning, the 24th September, we[*] started by day break in my own canoe; which I had brought up from the Indian village. The mist was so thick I could scarcely find my way to the nearest house on the shore, where we intended to breakfast. Upon arriving there, we found them all ill of the ague, and no eatables; so were obliged to push on to Billy McQue's. There nobody was at home but we took possession, and, thinking the spade looked cleaner than the frying pan, I broiled some venison we had with us on it; finding some ears of corn we roasted them also and made an admirable breakfast. As we were finishing one of the lads came in and offered us some potatoes, which we, thinking we had some way to go and as it was already afternoon, accepted; whilst they were boiling we broiled some more venison and after our dinner started again and reached Bob cajion-unk pretty early, where we slept on shavings in a loft at Sawers'.

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[*] Lieutenant Hay and himself.

Early on Wednesday morning, the 25th September, I found out the two men I had engaged to chop for me and, upon consulting with them, found that their boat and canoe were insufficient to take up our luggage, so I borrowed a scow and four men at 3/6 a day, from the canal which is cutting, and, after several hard hours' work, they got my load up the rapids. About two o'clock they reached Sawers', and thence Hay and I went on in the canoe and had a fire ready for them to cook their dinner at Need's. From thence I got them off about four o'clock, and, as it was a beautiful afternoon and we had a moon, I intended to work at it all night. About five we set off to follow them and overtook them at sunset, when the weather became menacing, and soon after a tremendous thunderstorm came on which forced us to land at the nearest point we could make. This, in the dark, happened to be a swamp—and here I must leave us for the present, endeavouring, for a long time ineffectually, to light a fire.

[The narrative of this expedition is continued in a letter addressed to his sister, dated the same as the previous letter, Peterborough, Oct. 31, 1833. This letter was also received on the same day as the other.]

Having filled the largest sheet I can find to my father with my adventures, and having still more than a month to record, I do not see why I should not kill two birds with one stone and dedicate the continuation to you. I left us, as you will no doubt know before you get this, endeavouring to light a fire upon a little ridge in a swamp by the lake side, and you must now imagine us successful notwithstanding the rain, and fancy Mr.

Hay and myself, six men, a woman and a half-starved wretched little baby sitting round the fire, some drying themselves, the rain having abated, and some cooking supper. Here we determined to sleep, and, after supper, the woman and baby were put under the boat, Mr. Hay and myself stretched ourselves side by side near the fire, with our knapsacks as pillows and my blanket and water-proof cloak over us, and the men each crept under a bush or tree as best he could; one poor devil, not knowing how far he was going, had not even brought his coat with him.

As I have mentioned the baby, lest your compassion should be too much excited by it, it may be as well to observe, that though the most miserable puny little creature imaginable a month since, it is now, thanks to the air of the woods, at least half a year older in appearance and more noisy than is at all agreeable.

It rained all night, but, thanks to my waterproof, Hay and I remained dry; but, about three or four in the morning, such a storm commenced that we were obliged to fly for shelter to a hollow tree where, notwithstanding our cramped position, I slept most soundly till day-break. It having cleared again a little, we breakfasted and started about seven (26th Sept.), but we had barely proceeded a mile when a storm more awful than any I have seen in Canada commenced, and Hay and I made with all speed for a sandy beach, and there, upsetting the canoe, we crept under and lay there till noon, without ever daring to peep out and see what had become of the scow. I don't think I ever saw such tremendous rain. About noon, having exhausted all our topics of conversation and having slept as much as we could, we got tired of our situation and, there being no chance of its clearing up, we emerged from our hiding place and launched our canoe. The scowmen were not far off, under a cedar tree; we roused them up and got once more under way, Mr. Hay and I in the canoe, and the woman and child with her husband in the boat, going on before to my land to light a fire, etc.

There we landed about three o'clock, completely drenched, and prepared to light a fire when we discovered that my fool of a man had brought no means of procuring a light. Now I, who, for the last four or five years of my life, never stirred out without tinder and flint and steel in my pocket, happened on this occasion to have left them behind; and, the only gun we had with us being a percussion one, we could get no fire from it; so we were obliged to send the man back in the boat to meet the scow, and, after near two hours vain endeavours to warm ourselves, we at last got a good fire up and supper cooked, just as the scow arrived. The evening having become fine on a sudden and the wind being fair, I determined upon sending the men back in the scow, much against their inclination. Just about sunset, however, the bad weather returned, and, as the poor devils did not get back till three o'clock the next afternoon, they have given me a bad name, averring that I only gave them four meals in three days, which is strictly true, but then they forgot to say that they had already breakfasted the first day and that I offered them at parting as much pork and potatoes with them as they liked, which they in a pet declined. However I have learnt two things from the days' adventures—never to stir twenty yards from my own door without flint and steel, and I have also got a light axe made to carry at my belt, and it has served me many a turn since; the other thing—never turn any man from my house at night, and God knows I should have been hospitable upon this occasion, as the house I then kept was an open house. This same house, to which we retired when the men were gone, consists of three cedars and a butternut, covered with wild vine,—very picturesque truly and very airy, and there it shall stand unharmed, if possible, amidst the general havoc, as a memento of my first landing; but as the road line, I find, runs over my very hearthstone, I may perhaps be compelled to have it down.

As soon as we had got our suppers, we got the canoe up to the fire and made it our roof. I gave Hay, as my guest, my best blanket, my waterproof and the choice of his bed, and I believe he slept pretty well; but as to myself my lair was on an inclined plane, so that as soon as I fell asleep I rolled out, and, instead of sleeping under the canoe, I slept under the drip of the canoe; as the fire had gone out, when I woke about one, and my blanket was very thin, I felt considerably cold. I woke up the men and made them get another fire, and for an hour or two I amused myself toasting potatoes at it till I got dry, when I went to bed again and again acted the part of gutter to the roof till morning, though as Hay's snoring kept me a good deal awake I continued to keep up my position rather better than in the earlier part of the night. But I must not grumble at Hay's comfortable sleep, for, though he had the better berth, he caught a cold and I did not.

The next morning, 27th Sept., it really became fine, and, having taken my choppers to show them where to begin, I set out with Hay to show him some land on Cameron's Lake; but, a stiff wind being against us, we thought, when we got to the Falls, there would be no time to cross the Lake; so we returned to dinner and then set off on our return, land-hunting as we went. A most lovely afternoon compensated us for our fatigues, and we reached Need's to sleep.

Here I had intended leaving Hay and returning to my land, but, hearing that the steamer was not coming up and as Hay had no other way of getting down but my canoe, I determined to go down with him, particularly as I could do nothing on my land at present and as I wanted to get up the rest of my luggage. And here I remained wasting this precious season of the year, through the delays of the tradesmen, from whom I could get nothing done without continually teazing and urging them on, and partly in waiting for Mr Andrew and Jameson, my two nearest neighbours, who were detained from the same cause and with whom I intended to get my luggage up.

From the 29th Sept., when I arrived, to the 11th October, when I left Peterborough, I have nothing to record but that, on the 6th, McAndrew and I walked up to Selby,* about nine miles off, the intended site of a flourishing village, and were much pleased with the beautiful rapids, upon which it is built; and that Hay, not being able to get land in my neighbourhood suitable to his wishes, has settled on Sandy Lake; for which I am sorry, as I was much pleased with him.

On Friday, the 11th, we set out to Mud Lake, being obliged to leave many things behind us, and got to the rapids at Bob-ca-je-won unk (that is the spelling I think I shall adopt, *a* and *j* having the English pronunciation) that night. Here McAndrew and I found that the government scow we had intended to use was removed, so we volunteered our services and those of our men to assist Jameson up, if he would lend us his scow afterwards. Accordingly on Saturday morning (the 12th) we commenced unloading her of about seven or eight tons of goods, and got thirteen hands from the works, who, with us eight, had hard work getting her over the fall; above this we loaded her again, when it appears the hands from the canal wanted $16.00 for the whole job of getting her up the rapids, which for three-quarters of a day we thought a most exorbitant charge; so Jameson paid them $4.50 for what they had done, and we all turned into the water, resolving to get her up ourselves; but, after having been an hour working hard up to our middles in the water, we were obliged to give it up, and Jameson had to go over again and cry *peccavi*; the contractors, like the Sibyl of old, sent us only eleven men but still charged the same $16.00 in addition to the $4.50. We felt ourselves however in their power and were obliged to submit; but we now got up gloriously, as we all, being already wet, continued to help in the water. About the middle however the channel suddenly deepened so much that I was left behind, unless I had taken to swimming. My first notice was seeing McAndrew, who is six feet two, put his watch in his mouth (mine had long been there) and the next moment I was up to the shoulders. Not relishing a swim, I left them and went on to prepare for their reception above, where I lighted a glorious fire in an empty shanty into which I effected an entrance *via* the chimney.

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* Now Lakefield.

The next morning, being Sunday (the 13th), we wasted several valuable hours in shaving and such luxuries, and did not get off till ten—with our own party only—and as we unfortunately struck upon some rocks in the rapids, we had to jump out again, then, the wind being very wintry, there arose a sort of contest who should take the oars to warm ourselves. However, what with the wind and what with our exercise, we were tolerably dry by the time we reached Cedar Point, where we resolved upon camping, about an hour after dark. Here we experienced the wisdom of the Indian custom of encamping before sunset, for it was so dark that we lost much time in procuring suitable wood, and were half an hour in getting a light, all our punk being wet in our pockets. At last, with the assistance of gunpowder, we lighted a fire, but to me, as flint and steel bearer, it was at the expense of one whisker and both eyelashes. After an excellent supper of stewed duck and potatoes, we slept most soundly, McAndrew and I occupying a bed of cedar boughs near the fire, with a buffalo robe for mattress and another for a counterpane.

Next morning (the 14th) we roused Jameson and got him on one and a half miles to my land to breakfast. Here McAndrew and I stayed behind looking at my land, and then followed to Cameron's Falls, where the scow was unloaded, and with our two men we brought her down, with a fair wind, to my place for dinner. Starting again at four, we reached Sandy Point soon after sunset; taking the precaution of calling at Cedar Point to carry away some of the embers, which were still smouldering from our last night's fire.

Next morning (the 15th) we were up before daybreak and pulling against a stiff breeze at sunrise. We reached the head of the rapids at ten and left our large scow there, going down to borrow a small scow from the works to bring up our luggage in two or three trips. McAndrew, with four hired hands, undertook the scow, whilst I remained getting a second load ready. Eight times they got round an island out of sight, and as often the current carried them back almost to their starting place; but at last they accomplished it and took up a second load. That night we slept in a bed and were so comfortable that we never were conscious till morning that our shanty, twenty by sixteen feet, contained twenty-three other souls.*

On Wednesday morning (the 16th) we got up another load, and, with four extra hands, took the large scow up to McAndrew's to sleep. My man I parted with the day before, nominally because his wife asked too high wages, but really because I found him too old to be of much use as a chopper and too fond of whiskey to be very useful as a trusty servant; and I should have been without a man, if I had not accidentally met my old friend Dan'l O'Flynn in the woods, carrying all his worldly property upon his back, consisting of a sheet, a blanket, a Bible and a † as he calls it. I do not remember whether I mentioned this individual in a former letter. The first time I was up the Lakes we observed a disconsolate figure, sitting on the shore, and, thinking that he might be lost, we approached him; he informed us that he was one Dan O'Flynn who, having been clearing his land in the rear for two months, had come down to the lake shore for the chance of seeing a man. Ever since, he has taken me under his especial patronage and has constituted himself my mentor and valet de chambre, requiring me, in re-

turn for these favours, to keep his money safe and never let him spend a halfpenny of it.

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* This inn, which was wanting in the first land hunting trips, was evidently built after the settlement was laid out by the Land Surveyor on Oct. 6 (see note p. 32). On that same day, Need says, a bid was made for the site of a tavern. This site is later described as a flat rock, and there is a flat rock of the size mentioned above, at the water's edge on the Rokeby side of the river, noted as McConnell's tavern in the cut on p. 173, which is no doubt the tavern floor of solid rock mentioned on p. 56.

† Undecipherable in the original

It rained all night at McAndrew's, but, by erecting a sort of tent of blankets, we slept pretty dry under our buffaloes. The next morning (the 17th), with two of the extra hands and Dan, I set off for my own land, and, after ranging my luggage under some cedars for the remainder of that day and half of the next, we employed ourselves in cutting a road from the landing, making my chopper's shanty our lodging.

By noon next day (the 18th), I had fixed upon my situation, which is at some distance from the Lake on the side of a hill; the shore being too much exposed and too low.

On Saturday (the 19th), the logs being all cut, we raised the walls; and on Sunday morning I set out with two men in my canoe to McAndrew's, who in the meantime had got on a little faster than I, having no road to cut. After breakfast he and I set out in my canoe to proceed up the Scugog into Ops to buy boards and potatoes. For two or three hours we were employed searching for the mouth of the river, which at last we found—about two and a half miles from where it is laid down in the maps, and, as we had fourteen to go up the river to the mills, it was dark when we arrived there.

The Scugog, for twelve miles of a very circuitous course, is one continued dismal swamp; the banks indeed are covered with trees, but between them, in spring at least, a canoe may pass. For the last two miles there begins to be a decided stream, and for the last an actual rapid between high and picturesque banks. At last it became so dark, and so difficult to thread one's way through the shoal of an unknown rapid, that we gave it up, and landing we groped our way through the woods, till we fell in with a path which led us to the Mills, and, there being no tavern, we were received by Mr. Purdy the miller, a Yankee.

Purdy's mills have, I should imagine, the largest mill-dam in the world. It raises the water seven feet and makes a navigable communication, where none before existed, for thirty-seven miles back. It destroys seven mill sites and overflows 11,000 acres of land. Last year the dam gave way and the water was six months in running out, raising the waters of our lakes so high that for five weeks Col. Baldwin's mills, forty miles off by water,* were stopped from working. When the dam was mended, the Scugog river had no existence for three months, while the dam was filling. You may form an idea from these facts of the unhealthy and low nature of the land in the townships of Ops and Cartwright

Next day (Monday the 21st), having bought our lumber and potatoes and arranged for their conveyance down, we returned, shooting ducks by the way, and slept at McAndrew's.

On Tuesday I returned home alone to breakfast and found the roof on my shanty; and on Wednesday we got the walls chinked and my luggage brought up. On Thursday the logs for the other shanty were cut, but for want of help we could not raise it. That same Thursday the 24th October I slept for the first time under a roof of my own.

On Friday the 25th in the morning, Robert Gordon, with whom I fell in by accident and have engaged as my man for the winter, set out in the choppers' skiff, and Dan and I in my canoe, to bring over help from McAndrew's. The skiff contrived to reach him, but Dan and I, after proceeding about one and a half miles, found it quite hopeless for a canoe to live in such a tremendous sea, and were obliged to run for the nearest point where the waves would allow us to effect a landing. Here we employed ourselves in exploring until the wind abated sufficiently to allow us to make another run for my own landing. Robert attempted that night to come over, but after being out two hours, baling with their hats, they were obliged to put back. On Saturday (26th) morning he arrived, rather late, with two hands; but we never should have got the walls up had not the scow with potatoes and the raft of boards fortunately arrived; and even with their assistance we did not get them quite up—though all the heaviest are up and the rest carried to the spot.

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* On Pigeon Creek in the Township of Emily.

On Sunday morning (27th), I set off with Dan and Robert to dinner at McAndrew's with the intention of proceeding here [Peterborough] the next day; but about midnight arrived, with two friends, Mr. Hunter, with whom McAndrew and I went up the Lakes when we chose our land; so I could do no less than accompany him on to do the honours of my own house and up to Cameron's Falls, getting to Need's that night and to Peterborough the following (29th).

To-morrow (1st Nov.) at five o'clock I shall be on my way back with all the things I can get up; but there will be some gleanings for McAndrew next week, and the next following we shall probably be shut up for the winter,—so be not surprised if you do not hear of me again for a couple of months. The frost is always very severe; if it will but hold off till my chimney is built I don't care.

My Journal has been so long this time that I have no room for fifty things I had to tell you of my plans, etc. At present I can only shortly tell you who are our society. My nearest neighbour, at Cameron's Falls, is Jameson, an agreeable, gentlemanly Irishman, a great land speculator who will soon have a town about him. I remember him of old by sight in Liverpool, where you will probably see him this winter. The next nearest and my most particular friend is McAndrew, a Scotchman from Elgin, knowing Grant Duff, John Morison, etc. He has been a long time in Portugal. Opposite me, and perhaps nearer than McAndrew, is a Mr. and Mrs Beaston; but I have seen nothing but their house as yet. These are the only Fenelon men. In Verulam, on our Lake, are Capt. Warren and Athill of Trin. Coll. Dublin; the one a puppyish soldier, the other gentlemanly but never can be agreeable till he gives up punning. Opposite them, Mr Fraser of the army, a pleasant man enough, with a little Dutch wife. He was shipwrecked in coming out and lost everything. Besides these are the three old settlers, Need, D'Arcos and Sawers. Then in Harvey there are Mudge and Hay, and two Trin. Coll. Dublin men, King and Evans; King a Jersey man, an excellent scholar and great linguist. Round this place [Peterborough] there are several young men, mostly Scotch and rather wild. My next most intimate acquaintance is Joseph Hunter, a Quaker, from Belfast, who lives principally at Cobourg. As to ladies, the three Miss Browns and Miss Crawford are my only acquaintances. And now farewell until sleighing time.

To his Brother

From my own house Jan. 9th, 1834

First let me wish you all the compliments of the season, and then apologize for the long period of my silence. My conscience however does not smite me much, as I not only wrote two letters upon the last occasion but gave fair warning that you might expect a long interval before you heard from me again. The post, as you must be aware, does not stop at my door, and it is a long walk to go forty miles through the snow to put a letter in the Post Office at Peterborough. One opportunity indeed I had when I sent my man down, about three weeks ago, but I hastened his departure for the sake of giving him company on his journey, and, though I still had two days' notice, this must serve as my excuse—I had just got into my new house and, as the thermometer stood at ten degrees, I was naturally extremely anxious to put in windows and doors before the cold increased; and, not to mention that I had no table, I had nothing but iron pens, in which the ink froze so fast as to render the writing even of a short note a work of considerable time and labour. However, to drop excuses, I am resolved to be ready for any chance opportunity to Peterborough, though at present in perfect ignorance how this is to reach any civilized portion of the province.

Your letter arrived by my man on his return [from Peterborough] on the day of all others when I least needed such a luxury. McAndrew was spending Xmas time with me; we had worked hard all day, flooring the loft and reducing everything to order; a table had been manufactured out of a door and two empty barrels, a table cloth was airing at the fire, silver forks, mus-tard, and such like almost forgotten luxuries were ready to grace it, and last—not least—we were almost longing for bed time to luxuriate once more in the novelty of a pair of sheets. Such were the prospects of enjoyment before us when Robert returned with a handful of letters for each, and a bundle of old newspapers which some kind friend at Peterborough had sent to enliven our solitude. Imagine what an evening we spent. If they had arrived now, when sheets, table cloth, etc, are losing the charm of novelty, and I am sitting alone by my fire, the arrival would have been better timed. But I will read your letter over again and then answer it.

The most important topic in your letter, or at least the one which has run most in my head, is—the advantage and safety of a person in England investing money in Canada; with regard to which, after revolving the matter long in my mind, I have come to the following opinion.

Land, except to one residing upon it and cultivating it himself, can never, for many years to come, be looked upon as a permanent investment; for, from the facility of acquiring a freehold, a system of tenantry can never be introduced, at least with anything like favourable terms to the landowner, and even then it can be by no means common. Purchasing land is only a speculation for the purpose of selling it again, and it is the most profitable and certain kind of speculation that Canada holds out.

Land speculations are of three sorts, all profitable but differing greatly in their natures. The first is confined almost entirely to storekeepers and married men in old and well settled townships, and is the way in which almost all our Canadian fortunes have been made. A storekeeper gives a long credit, or an attorney or banker advances money on mortgage to some needy and extravagant farmer, and, besides getting a good interest, generally ends in getting possession of his farm at half its value, and then speedily disposes of it to some new emigrant who is frightened of the discomforts of the woods and is glad to give a handsome price for a ready built house and a few acres of cleared land. These speculators know the circumstances of every farmer in the neighbourhood; they find a poor one and lend him money to be repaid when his crops come in, which they generally contrive to secure below the market price. The next year he wants a larger advance; the third year, after his crops have come to market, he has perhaps barely enough to buy his winter's stores; he talks of selling his farm, and tries to hold out till the emigrants arrive next year; but the emigrants barely get up the country till June, and before that time he has generally been obliged to sell at any price which the speculator may have the modesty to offer. There are no doubt many honourable men engaged in this kind of trade, and a good bargain need not be thrown away from pity to the necessities of the seller; but thus habitually to lie in wait to prey upon the distresses of others is too much like a rattlesnake, waiting for a bird to drop into its mouth which its eye has already fascinated.

The second kind of speculation is—purchasing lands in quite new townships, which may frequently be done very cheap, either by contracting for the survey, or by buying of the surveyors, or of individuals to whom lands had been given by the Indians previous to the survey. But here there is a risk, as it is often long before a township begins to settle; for instance, this spring there was not a settler in this township, though it had been surveyed upwards of ten years

The third, and only way of speculating I think of practising myself or would recommend to others, is—to watch for a decided demonstration in a township towards settlement, and then go over it, and, having ascertained where the best land and best situations are, then to make your purchase. The next year, or in two years at most, you may be certain of selling again at double the price; and even if you have bought a lot at hazard, if it is not actual rock or swamp and the situation is good, you are sure of a handsome profit And observe, that a person who has paid all the purchase money and, not being in want of money, will receive payment by instalments with interest at 6 p ct. will always have a preference over others. If a purchaser does not come soon, I am sure it would pay well to clear a few acres, build a small house and put a man to farm it on shares; and then, in a year or two, when the lazy gentry begin to find their way up, you may sell it as a cleared farm.

United Empire rights are also sources of considerable profit, but as our sapient Parliament has been legislating about them lately I know not how they may answer for the future. With mine, I mean to sell one hundred acres to an actual settler at a cheap rate, and when I get the deeds out, upon his having done the settlement duty, the other one hundred acres is held by as good a title as any other land. My neighbour Jameson is a very large speculator in them and will, I have no doubt, succeed very well.

For other modes of investment 6 or even 12 p. ct. may be obtained on mortgage on the very best security.

Banks, railroads and public works pay well, but not proportionately as high as in England.

The only permanent investment which strikes me at present as very advisable is that of houses in towns—not in the hundred new towns which are advertised every day in the newspapers, but in a thriving, rapidly increasing place like Peterborough. House rent is enormously dear here; a house which costs £100, built on a town lot of half an acre costing about £25, would be the cheapest house in Peterborough if it did not bring a rent of £25, besides the annually increasing value of the town lot itself. Imagine in Peterborough, which in 1825 was an Indian encampment, land selling at 4/- p. square foot, which about a quarter of an acre did this year.

With regard to the boat of which you offer to make me a present, I am at present pretty well stocked with these modes of conveyance.

My naval department consists of a canoe and a boat; the former of which I mean to sell in the spring and buy another more portable. I decidedly have not yet acquired the true Indian twist of the wrist, but I am a very tolerable hand and can face a very heavy swell or stem a rapid much to my own satisfaction. My boat is undoubtedly the happiest effort of the genius of our boatbuilder; it is light, being built of cedar, rows well for either one or two persons, and, although flat-bottomed to suit our shallow shores, will I have no doubt sail pretty fairly by the aid of a leeboard which I am proposing to attempt. She is of considerable capacity too, having brought up six persons, three goats and some luggage from Peterborough. For heavier articles there is now on the stocks, to be finished by the breaking up of the ice, a scow, a joint concern between McAndrew and myself, calculated to carry about three or four tons, which will serve us for some years to come. And what is a scow? I do not know whether the word is English. It is a species of flat-bottomed boat of which the ground plan is a rectangle, and this the side view, rather a clumsy machine you will say, more especially if you saw the beams of wood, four inches by three, and eighteen feet long, which serve as oars; but a London wherry with spoon oars is not in keeping in the woods, and we have made even such a craft as this carry a ton or two, at the rate of three and a half miles an hour, for two or three hours at a stretch. In such a scow, belonging to Jameson, we have got our goods up from Bob-caje-won-unk this year and next year we must do the same; for though the canal is progressing, the whole plan in my opinion is so radically bad that until it is altered entirely the steamer will never get up into Sturgeon Lake. From Peterborough to Bob-caje-won-unk our goods are carried up at 2/- p. 100 lbs.; and storage at the rapids is 3d. p. 100 lb.; from thence to our own houses we cannot estimate the expense at less than the same sum, even basing our calculations upon our last trip which was our most economical. At half past five I rowed down to McAndrew's and brought him up to Cameron's Falls, altogether about twelve miles; Jameson being absent, we rambled into the bush till he returned, and, after a late dinner, borrowed his scow and started about seven in the evening. Stopping at my house to take in our crew and get tea, we rowed on, a great part of the way through ice, and reached the tavern at the foot of the rapids at four in the morning, very glad to go to sleep on the solid rock which forms the floor of the shanty. All the next day we were engaged in taking up our load by boat to the scow—which we had left at the top of the rapids, about one and a half miles off—and carrying some doors and other awkward-shaped articles through the bush. The next day we had one more trip up with the boat and then proceeded with the scow and reached my place before dark, performing the distance from Need's to McAndrew's, rather more than seven miles, in two hours. Our crew consisted of McAndrew and two of his men, myself and my boy, and of Jameson part of the way down.

I give you these details to show you that twelve barrels of flour and a barrel of beef are not got up either without labour or expense. Allowing McAndrew and myself 5/- a day for our work, which I am sure we deserved, the trip cost us about 2/- p. 100 lb., making in all about ½d. a pound upon every article which we got from Peterborough. But if this extra ½d adds considerably to the cost of pork and flour, what will you think of a most unfortunate cargo of potatoes which we got from Ops, which, besides being frozen on the road, cost us at least 1/- p. bush. in freight, not to mention two days lost in going to buy them. I never was very fond of potatoes, but now I have an almost Cobbettish horror of the "Lazy root." Yet a requisite quantity of fat pork cannot be turned down without some vegetable matter to qualify it; and unleavened bread, baked in a frying pan, is but a sorry substitute for bread. True I have, or had, thirty pounds of beef, and McAndrew very generously gave me half a bushel of turnips, but these are luxuries which I reserve for chance guests or such great occasions as Xmas or New Year's days.

As I am on the subject of eating, you may wish to know how we live in the backwoods. In the summer fish, ducks and venison are rather plentiful, but in winter, that is from November to April inclusive, salt pork is the standing dish for breakfast, dinner and tea; and a most expensive one it is, each member of my establishment consuming at the rate of one and a quarter pounds per day at 6d. p. lb. To make this pork go further I deal much in soups—potato soup is the favourite and is so much relished by my men that it has become the ordinary dish at breakfast. Should you wish to introduce it into your establishment, the following is the receipt. Take a lump of pork and, having peeled fifteen or twenty potatoes, put the whole with an onion into a pot and boil it until it has acquired the desired consistency. You may laugh, but I can assure you my potato soup is so celebrated that McAndrew desired me to bring my boy over one Sunday to teach his cook the mystery of the concoction. My pea soup is not so much admired, being merely hard black pease floating about in weak greasy broth. We tried a plum pudding at McAndrew's on Xmas day, but it was a decided failure; the currants and suet were scarce, the eggs entirely wanting, and flour by much the preponderating ingredient. We ate it indeed in honour of the day, but it was decidedly bad; however it had the desired effect of making a perfect Esquimaux of poor little Polyphemus, a one-eyed deformity who serves McAndrew in the office of valet, an amusing monster who, in addition to the extinction of his luminary, is marked with small pox, lisps most unintelligible Cumberland and has an unconquerable aversion to the use of a pocket handkerchief. Nevertheless, notwithstanding these our Canadian luxuries I have not forgotten an English dinner, and I am almost ashamed to say that visions do sometimes float before my imagination of the dinners I shall eat when I pay you a visit in Europe; but more especially with Prince Hal in Shakespeare "I do remember that creature, small beer." Before that time indeed I may have become exclusively enamoured of salt pork and wedded to the use of lake water and that detestable stuff Canadian whiskey. Custom does a great deal, as in the case of tea. Being short of sugar, McAndrew and I agreed to stop it to the men, and to set an example gave it up ourselves; and as to milk,—pray never mention the word goats to me—milk was a thing we never dreamt of; but on Christmas we resolved to enjoy ourselves, produced the sugar and sent three men to get a pint from a neighbour, I don't know how many miles off, we tried with both milk and sugar, and then with each separately, but finally unanimously resolved that pure unsophisticated tea is the best.

I have been rather lengthy upon the subject of eating, but without some allusion to that most important function I should have given you but a poor notion of my situation; and moreover because matters of cookery have assumed an additional degree of importance with me from my having officiated as cook myself for three weeks. I certainly did once roast a duck to charcoal, and once burned the pea-soup so much it was necessary to give it to the goats, but, upon the whole, when I handed over the frying pan and potato kettle to my boy Willie, I did it with the conviction that nature intended me for a great cook; great, first because I have a genius that way, and secondly because I never could overcome my aversion to washing up dishes, etc.

And now I will leave cookery and eating, having first impressed upon you two economical maxims which I owe to Dan O'Flynn, whom I mentioned in my last letters; first, give your servants plenty of potato soup because, as he elegantly expressed it, it blows them out without much consumption of butcher's meat; and secondly, either allow them very little tea and then they will use less sugar, or give them no sugar and then they cannot drink the tea so strong.

Upon referring back I find that the origin of this culinary dissertation was the expense of bringing up stores, and I may add that this will be most materially diminished when we get our scow, which, being built lighter and on an improved construction, McAndrew and I can take down to Peterborough by ourselves in one day and bring it back in two.

The sleighing, about which we hear so much, is I am convinced unpracticable for us who have no beaten track; at least unless the ice most materially improves I have had experience of it once and do not wish to repeat the experiment. About seven in the evening I set [out] to bring home some forty or fifty pounds on a handsleigh from McAndrew's, a distance of four-and-a half miles, and I cannot have been less than four-and-a-half hours on the road—the last mile, I am convinced, took more than two hours. An unlucky cramp seized one of my legs, which would not hold out more than ten yards without a rest, and when I was ready to start again the sleigh was always frozen to the snow; the worst of it was that I could not keep myself in exercise long enough to keep warm. The articles were too numerous to be carried, and sleigh and all, they proved too heavy; so I had to trudge on as well as I could, for as to leaving the sleigh, I did not like to be

Alexander McAndrew

beaten, and some of the contents were of so savoury a scent—no less a treat than a couple of dozen of red herrings—that I was afraid the wolves would be making free with them. To mend the matter, on my arrival about midnight, I found the fires out and my boy fled to the choppers for protection from the wolves, it being before the introduction of doors into my establishment. From this experiment I have come to the determination never to drag a sleigh again in deep snow, or, if I do, at least to perform my journey by daylight

Talking of wolves, they are plentiful about, no doubt; McAndrew, who has an open view of the lake, has seen several and I have seen numbers of tracks, but I have never been fortunate enough to fall in with any, though one would have thought that the odour of my Billy goat would have attracted them for miles round

Your questions as to my neighbours have already been answered. The only one I see much of or care much for, at least when Jameson is away, is McAndrew. I don't know whether I mentioned that he is from Aberdeen awa, and knows Morison and some of Grant Duff's nephews and nieces, though I believe not the gentleman himself. He was many years in Lisbon and has a brother settled there; also a brother in Liverpool whose office is somewhere in Chapel Walks I think He came out originally with the intention of settling in business in Montreal. He is a very agreeable and useful neighbour We came up together to look at land, bought it on the same day, have just the same quantity and have the same views with regard to it All our stores have been bought and brought up together, and so much have all our motions been in concert as yet that I have a notion the good people in Peterborough believe us to be living together. We have almost lived together for this last three weeks and the result has been that, by mutual consent this morning (the 10th), we have agreed never to live so long at a time in one small house again, being aware of our natural infirmities.

As to the parentage, etc., of the rest, about which you enquire—Jameson is, I believe, the son of a wealthy brewer in Dublin; he brought out a good capital, intending to enter into business, but speculated in U. E. rights till he found he had gone so deep that he must become resident himself. Sawers is a silly boy. His father is a Lieutenant of Marines who it seems has married a sister of Don Miguel's friend, Sir John Campbell. Need's father is I suppose connected in some way with that extensive firm of Walker, Parker & Co. whose names are spread far and wide as manufacturers of patent shot.* D'Arcos's father, somebody told me, is or was Mayor of Cork or Londonderry or some such Irish place. Athill's papa is an Irish Dean Captain Warren I never saw but once. Mr Frazer was of the 42nd; he is a gentleman and is married to a nice little Flemish wife. I know nothing of his parentage; but he is a Scotchman and poor, and so of course is highly descended. Mr. Wilson is a middle aged man; a very good soul He is an Irishman, poor, and, they tell me, come of decent folk. I also hear that he ruined himself by endeavouring to procure a separation for a sister from a husband who used her ill. He is at present superintending Cameron's Falls for Jameson, in his absence, but will settle here. Next year we are to have a Mr Boyce, of the army I believe, of whom Jameson speaks highly, and a Captain Dobbs, an agreeable, gentlemanly, elderly man of whom I know nothing more than that he is reported to be an excellent chess player, and, what is of much more importance, to be the father of six daughters. Such is the list of the inhabitants of the townships of Verulam and Fenelon.

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* Need's own account of himself, in the preface to *Six Years in the Bush*, is that he graduated at Oxford, with a view to one of the learned professions, but a strong desire to try his fortune in the West came over him, and his friends, though they did not encourage, did not thwart his resolution, but gave him assistance which enabled him to carry it into execution, which assistance appears to have been liberal

Everything else must wait till to-morrow, as my candle will barely see me to bed and my fire has already expired; rather a strange occurrence, you will say, on the 10th of January in this much abused climate, and that too in a house the walls of which are still full of holes, which admit the light by day and wind enough at night to disturb most materially the equanimity of my candle.

11th. Before proceeding further I must vindicate this climate from the calumnies that have been circulated against it. They say, indeed, that newcomers never feel the cold; if so, it is an illustration of the saying that "God tempers the wind to the shorn lamb" for truly they have to submit to strange lodging But I maintain that Canada is no colder than England, whatever the thermometer may say to the contrary. True there are other outward and visible signs of cold; the ink freezes in your pen, the lather in your shaving brush; the latch of the door sticks to your hand, and the water has occasionally frozen in my glass at dinner; but, though the average height of the thermometer inside my dwelling is about a degree below the freezing point, I have never been really cold but once, when I

woke last Sunday at Cameron's Falls in the middle of the night and found that McAndrew had stolen the bed clothes.

In the other shanty, in which I spent my first six weeks, a piece of canvas represented a door and a hole in the roof the chimney; windows were unnecessary in such a dwelling, for such were the spaces between the logs that, when you were outside at night and the fire was bright, the shanty bore a striking similitude to a tin lantern*; every motion inside was visible—just such a house as Cato would have wished to live in. My bed consisted of two buffalo skins, one above and the other below; and empty barrels, chests, etc., served the purposes of chairs and tables. Yet in the midst of this I never was cold, and the two colds I have had, in consequence of sleeping in warm houses, never lasted more than a week. Let anybody look at me now, writing without my coat, (for it was only last week I took to wearing a coat at all, and even now I only put it on after dinner) and dare to say that Canada is a cold country.

Having answered all your queries, I must be as concise as possible, as I have to walk down to McAndrew's this afternoon, whose choppers are going to Peterborough to-morrow. My establishment consists of two men, chopping by contract, whose shanty is a quarter of a mile off and one of whom has a wife who washes for me; my man Robert (at eleven dollars per month), who has only to-day fairly begun chopping, having been employed almost wholly as yet in plastering, chimney-building, and other odd jobs about the house; and a boy, William, who, besides cooking, carrying water, cutting firewood, etc, does a good deal of chopping. To these may be added two goats, though I am afraid the number will speedily be reduced to one, as I have been called away from my letter this morning to give surgical assistance to poor Billy, who I think has received his deathwound from the limb of a falling tree, which struck him between the horns. He can walk about a little, and his companion is now most affectionately caressing him and smelling at his wounded head, but I am afraid his case is a bad one. Should he die I will turn his carcass to more use than it ever was when living, by trailing it a mile or two over the Lake and then spend the night by it, wrapped up in a blanket, for a chance of a shot at the wolves.

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* The old fashioned tin lantern was without glass, the light streaming from innumerable small punctures in the tin walls

Ho sbavato [he appears here to have spilled the ink over his letter]—But there is one advantage of the frost at least—that ink, if spilt, freezes before it can stain much—this looks like an exaggeration, but it is a fact

It is astonishing what an immense quantity of work has to be expended even upon a small log-house before it is habitable. I have kept an exact account of our labours, and do not find, on a review, that much time has been lost; but in looking back at the whole I can hardly comprehend how three men can have been kept constantly at work for two months and a half in fitting up a house and a shanty. McAndrew, having had a carpenter for a month, has decidedly got the start of me in comfort, but, having been burnt out at Montreal, he does not require so many cupboards, shelves and lock-up places, to stow away his luggage in, as I do. My almost constant work this winter will be carpentering. I am no great hand at chopping as yet, having

had very little practice, but I am often surprised at the dexterity with which I wield an axe in fine work, such as hewing and squaring logs.

Amongst my evening studies I may reckon an attempt to teach myself Indian, by the aid of a translation of the Testament; but, as I have to form my own grammar and dictionary as I go on, it is no easy task. It is anything but a concise language, as, from some specimens, I had at first imagined; a verse in Indian generally takes twice as many words as in English; and such words! Ten syllables is no unusual length; of which the root itself is perhaps only two, the rest being prefixes and suffixes, and, if I may coin such a word, interfixes; for two or three syllables seem sometimes to be thrust in between the disjointed syllables of the root—but I will tell you more about it in the spring . . . .

C—— enquires about the resources of the country, on behalf of a Captain Stuart. Without knowing the circumstances, I can only say, in general terms, that some part of Canada may be chosen as an advantageous settlement for everybody; but none, except such as have an independent income—as half pay officers—or actual working farmers, will thrive well in an old settled part The woods, the backwoods, is the place for everybody who has health and enterprise; and, in point of society, I have never heard of any part, with the exception of Blandford in the London district, and Moore, further west still, which could compare with the back townships in the Newcastle district.

I have had the misfortune to break the main spring of my watch, and, in the absence of the sun, have been reduced to measure time by the consumption of firewood and candle (three-and-a-half inches after dark is my tea time). This uncertainty of time has set me a-meditating upon clocks, and many times I have longed for one of those 15/- Dutch clocks which go so well in England. If T—— were coming out, such a thing might be sent with him. If I had a watch I should not now have been writing almost in the dark, with my dinner yet to get and a walk of four-and-a-half miles over the Lake yet before me.

My books too I want out; all at least that appear worth the carriage. But above all, I want a companion I must have a dog or I shall be reduced to introducing poor Billy into the parlour, notwithstanding his odour. A terrier is a good dog and a spaniel is not amiss; but the dog of all dogs for this country—and one which can scarcely be procured at all and then only second rate—is a hound. Only imagine our living on salt pork at 6d. per pound with the knowledge that 200 pounds of fat venison is running about close to, if you had but a hound to drive him into the Lake; and then fancy our longings for such an animal. A foxhound, if he has once been hunted, will not take well to deer; but there are such things as staghounds, which are sometimes to be procured by diligent enquiries I once mentioned the thing to McAndrew, and he was so much taken with the idea of our each having one that I have no doubt his first enquiry, when I bring this letter, will be, whether I have alluded to the noble animal.

These things, I am afraid, are only delusions of the imagination, but I throw them out as hints for your private meditations......

To his Father

York, Feb. 3rd, 1834

I found so much inconvenience, in my last letter to William, from writing without any systematic arrangement; the multifarious subjects, upon which I had to treat, led me into such long digressions; that I must return to my old plan of first telling you my personal adventures in chronological order, and then of answering the numerous queries which your long and welcome letter contains.

The first occurrence of any note, since my letter, was an accident of much more importance than that which befell poor Billy, who, by the bye, is recovered. One of my choppers had his arm broken by the fall of a tree. I was at McAndrew's at the time, but upon being sent for returned with him and set the arm. I was the operator, but was very glad to have McAndrew's advice and opinion. The fracture was, luckily, above the elbow, and my patient is now convalescent and, as far as I can see, the arm is as good as ever.

Up to the 22nd of January, with the exception of this accident, I have nothing to record; I was constantly employed in carpenter work and increasing the comforts of my house, whilst the chopping was going on steadily; but the 22nd was quite an era amongst us. I had gone down to McAndrew's to get back some tools, and we were looking down the Lake and admiring its beauties, when we discovered two figures at a distance, evidently a white man and an Indian. Never having been three months in the backwoods without seeing a new face, you cannot enter into our delight, and, if you had seen us looking at ourselves in the glass and capering about the house, you would have taken us for madmen. Our glee indeed was rather sobered when we discovered seven other figures on the opposite shore and began to meditate upon our accommodations. To cut the matter short, the party presently arrived, consisting of Jameson, whom we had imagined in England, Mr. Wilson of Cameron's Falls, Mr. Wallis, a friend of McAndrew's and partner of Mr. Bellingham to whom General Walsh gave me a letter, Messrs. Macredie, McCall and Hughes, three new arrivals, two Indians and a boy—a pretty considerable party for the backwoods. However, as the most of them had blankets, we contrived to lodge them pretty well; and as to eating, a huge piece of beef with turnips (our great luxuries) had been put into the pot when we first perceived them. Any wants in the establishment were easily overlooked, on account of the shameful inhospitality they had met with from our neighbours below. I have hinted already at this fault in our neighbours, but the present case was far worse than any we ever experienced. . . . . From this sweeping censure I must except Need in the present instance—he was from home—and D'Arcos, who is very kind hearted and does not seem to propose turning savage.

The next day the whole party visited me. The day following we moved up to Cameron's Falls and took a ramble over Cameron's Lake. On the 25th we set out for Balsam Lake, which looks even prettier in winter than in summer. Bushwalking in winter is rather hard work, particularly for those who like me could not get their boots on and were obliged to put up with worn out moccasins, which, except for the appearance of the thing, is much the same as walking in one's stocking feet; but a dinner of porcupine repaid us for all our fatigues. It is a most delicious dish, not unlike sucking pig, but with much more flavour. The next day we sent the two Indians on to Purdy's mills, to get us a sleigh on to Peterborough, and we slept once more at Mc Andrew's. He and I had been sometimes talking of going down to Peterborough for a few days, and we now took the present opportunity of having company on the road.

The next morning early we set out, and so much time was taken up in packing, etc., that most of us got no breakfast. The Scugog being a very winding river, four or five miles are to be saved by cutting through the bush in some places, and, the ice being bad, the last three miles are also through the bush. The tracks of our Indians of course were to be our guides, but, there having been a considerable fall of snow during the night, it was often a matter of great difficulty to discover them. . . . . . You will have some idea of the fatigue of the walk when I tell you that there was near two hours space between the arrival of the first and the last of our party, though the distance scarcely exceeds ten miles . . . . . after [all] I doubt whether it is not still more fatiguing in summer.

The rest of our journey to Peterborough was performed in a sleigh, of which I took the dimensions from curiosity, viz, five feet seven-and-a-half inches by two feet nine inches, into which seven of us and the driver were stowed, and occasionally our two Indians. Considering that McAndrew and Macredie are upwards of six feet two inches by exact measurement and the other four, except Jameson, more than six feet, I think this is a specimen of packing from which Mr Berly might have taken a lesson.

Having staid for a ball at Peterborough. . . . . I rode one of Wallis's horses down to this place. My business down here—to get the bonds, etc., of my U. E. rights—has been satisfactorily arranged, and I might return to my fireside again if my friends here did not detain me a little longer. We are in hope of acquiring two new neighbours in persons of McCall and Macredie, and I am remaining here until, having seen the owner of a front lot before some land which we could procure for them, they will decide whether they will purchase or not. In case they do, I am to make arrangements for them for building houses, clearing land, etc., before the spring, when they will come up, making a tour of the west in the meantime. To morrow will probably settle the matter. They are both extremely desirable settlers. McCall is a young man of some independent income, very quiet and gentlemanly and has been somewhat of a traveller. The other not so well off in worldly matters but very well informed upon most subjects, very good-natured and exceedingly amusing from his simplicity and utter ignorance of the wickedness of this world, which in a person six feet two-and-a-half inches and upwards is more particularly ridiculous. He is acquainted with the Hays, as is also Wallis. Hughes, who is not with us here, is a Cockney and very amusing in his way; has been in Italy, at Sorrento, etc., etc.; a great admirer of the French and French philosophy, without a particle of anything in him deserving the name; very sentimental; but withal an agreeable person, a German scholar moreover and a chess player. He is not yet decided as to his location, but it appears not improbable that he may buy some of my land and increase our neighbourhood still more. Wallis, who brought them all up to us, is quite a first-rate person, but I will say no more of him as you will see him in Liverpool soon and judge for yourself. He is a much more decided person than Jameson and is not likely to disappoint me again; in fact I believe he is going to establish a house in Liverpool, in connection with that at Montreal, and has offered to be instrumental in forwarding my parcels, etc., for me.*

To-day, (the 4th), I have been to see our provincial Parliament, who certainly are not an imposing body and do not seem to be more celebrated for talking to the point than their prototypes at home; but in one thing they have effected an improvement upon our English forms: when a division takes place, the Ayes stand up in their places and a little boy calls out their names in order, each sitting down as his name is called, the Clerk at the table taking their names down; the same is repeated with the Noes, and the lists are then handed to the Speaker, who declares the majority. Another plan is good:—each member has his own seat with a small desk before it.

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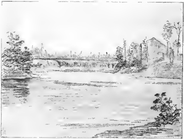
* James Wallis, later of Merino, Peterborough, became a life-long friend. He came to Canada in 1832 and engaged in a mercantile business in Montreal. This first visit to Cameron's Falls was no doubt preliminary to a partnership with Mr. Jameson which was arranged soon afterwards. Together they built a saw-mill at the Falls. Mr. Wallis at the same time purchased eight or ten thousand acres in the township of Fenelon. The mill continued in operation until 1858 when it was burnt down. Mr. Jameson was seldom at Fenelon Falls, and he returned before long to Liverpool and died there. Mr. Wallis, though he kept his house at Fenelon Falls, did not reside there continuously after 1840, when he took a house in Peterborough. The superintendence of the mill was in the hands of Major Maclaren. Merino, Mr. Wallis's residence at Peterborough was built in 1861, when he married Miss Forbes, daughter of Commander Robert Millar Forbes, R.N., who settled in Peterborough about 1827. His first wife, who was Miss Janet Fisher, appears in these letters later. Mr. Wallis died at Merino in May, 1893.



Fenelon Falls with the Mill

Pencil drawing by Anne Langton

To-morrow I hope to get the affair about the land settled, and to call upon the Governor to present him a petition upon the subject of a road through our township, and then I shall be ready to return home.

In your remarks upon the relative advantages of my township and that of Adelaide, I am surprised that such a determined foe to monopolies could imagine for a moment that the Canada Co.'s management could be an advantage to the latter. The fact is that Adelaide does not belong to the Co., but, if it did, from all accounts it would be in much worse hands than those of Government. From what I have heard, from those who have been in the Co.'s possessions, they are most shamefully neglecting a very fine country, and jobbing is there carried on to a much greater extent than in the Government districts. Indeed of late years there is nothing worthy of the name of a job; every [thing] seems to be conducted upon the fairest principles. We have certainly more land speculators amongst us, but they, especially when they deal in U. E. rights, are often an advantage. Jameson, for instance, in order to make his speculations answer, must bring at least fifty working families into our township next year, or at any rate the following one. As to Adelaide and the new western townships in general, I learn from gentlemen interested in them and now in York that the want of water and pine timber is even more felt than the distance from a market. The land I believe to be superior to ours, and the winter not so long; but I am perfectly content with what I have got. The locks at Bobcajewonunk are constructing, I believe, at the expense of the District, assisted by a loan from the Province to almost the whole amount, to be repaid out of the tolls. As to the remainder of the communication, the opening of the Trent is an affair which we can hardly expect yet. The surveyor is at present engaged in making his report, but the result has not yet been made public; I heard however to-day from a very good authority that the upper part is to be opened next year, so as to extend our inland navigation about thirty miles; the remainder will be a work of great expense, and it seems to be the opinion that it will be carried into effect by a company, assisted by Government. In the meantime two bills have been brought in to form companies for connecting Rice Lake with Cobourg by a railroad, and with Port Hope by a canal. I spoke the other day with the surveyor and engineer of the latter line, who had completed their line within half a mile, and both agreed in saying there would be no great obstacle to the work. The bill for this canal I think almost certain to pass.

From Sturgeon Lake to Cameron's Lake is a rise of about 30 feet, and the land between being limestone rock will make the locks expensive—at present they are not thought of. From thence to Balsam Lake the rise may be about four or five feet, but the river is so shallow and the banks so low that the last three-quarter of a mile must be a canal. Balsam Lake and Lake Simcoe are pretty nearly on a level, and, for canoes, only seven miles in one place and three in another are portages. The Lake Simcoe people talk of opening this by a company; but, until the Trent or the Port Hope Canal [is finished] I do not think there will be any work, above Bobcajewonunk, and even these I fear our steamer will scarcely pass until late next summer.

At present you see everything is in embryo; but, before I have any crops to sell, I have no doubt the six or seven miles land carriage at Peterborough will be all that interrupts my water communication with Montreal.

I am not surprised at your feeling uneasy about my U. E.'s, as the low price must have given you some fears as to the validity of the title, but be assured they are groundless; the practice of selling them has long been permitted by a fiction of the law, and, although contrary to the original intentions of the Government, the necessity of putting actual settlers on each lot has been found to accelerate the settlement of a township so much that no obstacle is now thrown in the way of it, at least in our part of the Province.

I have now 400 acres of them in the back of my land, for 200 of which I shall be able to get out my deeds next summer, in consideration of my own settlement. I have also secured the lot intended for B——, meaning to sell it again to a desirable neighbour; merely covering my own outlay, which is much below what land now fetches in Fenelon.

As to the desponding which you seem to expect I shall feel in long winter evenings, I can assure you you need feel no alarm; I never felt so little inclined to despond in my life. Your fears lest we should grow boorish in our manners are, I think, needless—at our end of the lake at least; our dress, of course, is not in the style of a town dandy, but we have agreed to keep up a degree of form which sometimes amuses me when I look round on the accompaniments of the scene. You all seem to run upon the subject of danger, as if we were exposed to any here; the fact is, with ordinary precaution, there is nothing in the life of a backwoodsman which is worthy of the name. Fatigue and inconvenience there is in abundance, but danger none, and, as far as I have seen of the two former, there is nothing which novelty, at present, does not make rather pleasant than otherwise, and to which custom hereafter will [not] reconcile us

I must hurry through the rest of your queries in order to go and drive a bargain, before dinner, with the owner of the land I wish to purchase for McCall and Macredie.

Our iron stoves are truly detestable; mine I rarely use, except when there are more than one in my house; for there is only one warm corner beside the fire My chimney is a most rude hill of stones and mud and wood, of a very singular shape, and throws out no heat except immediately in front; but I console myself because it draws admirably.

You ask about the sturgeon in our lake, but the name is *a non lucendo* Our Indians, the Mississaugas, were originally settled near Niagara, where there are plenty of the fish, and, upon coming up here, they gave the lake the name it now bears—*Namé*—I know not why.

You suggest sending me out an assortment of articles from England I do not approve of the plan. The difficulties and expense of getting them up would be very great; any trifles we may want we can get from the large stores in York, cheaper than we could get them up ourselves from Montreal. Pork is our greatest expense, and this we shall get cheaper this year, as McAndrew and I have ordered thirty barrels between us, which Wallis, who is on his road to Ohio to speculate largely in the article, will let us have at prime cost. What we do not want ourselves, our neighbours will take from us. In the same manner we are proposing to do with oxen, which we must get in spring. One or other of us will go over to Rochester, with a man who knows the points of an ox, and bring over six yoke from thence for ourselves and others on the Back Lakes

Your Almanack must be wrong in the date of our land sale; or more probably there was some confusion in my date; for, from the length of my letter, I frequently take advantage of a spare hour to begin a letter, and finish it on a subsequent day without notifying the change of date. At any rate I not only bought the land in question at 10/- but got my deed for it yesterday, being a long parchment document which I dare say cost the Government twice as much as they received for the land.

By the bye that reminds me of your long tirade against jobbing. Some few snug jobs, in a quiet way, no doubt are to be found here as elsewhere, but, as far as land is concerned, as Canning said to L. Brougham, you have thrown away a most excellent stock of indignation; the most sharp-sighted leader of the Opposition could find no fault at present. One small remnant of a job is all that is to be perceived in our back townships, though the old ones are still suffering from the effects of the good old system; the surveyors are paid by a percentage of the land and their portions ought to be chosen by ballot; but it would seem that in this operation Fortune contrived to get one eye from under the bandage, for the frontages are generally the lots first drawn. Our township however was surveyed as far back as 1826 One other transaction annoyed me a good deal, and perhaps I may have alluded to it in some of my letters, but I believe that now we have no cause to complain—Government officers ought, I think, to be incapacitated from speculating in land, but the land in question was bought by Mr. McDonell fairly at public auction; and if he got it cheap it was simply that no one liked to bid against one who is so generally liked for a favourite lot.

Since I mentioned the Parliament before I have paid our legislators another visit and have heard a long rigmarole from the two leaders of the Opposition; one of them commenced as follows "Several Honorable gentlemen has rose in this 'Ouse"—a very fair sample of the whole oration; I feel myself fast growing a Tory. There is a singular incongruity in the *tout ensemble* of the House; the court dress and sword of the Sergeant at Arms and the cocked hat of the Speaker (instead of a wig) all seem as if intended to look imposing; but the appearance of the members themselves, writing their letters or reading their newspapers at their several desks, whilst a little boy is running about, bringing them plates of sandwiches, etc., reminded one much of a coffee house During the whole of the five or six speeches I listened to, not a single member appeared to think of anything but his own business; and, when one speaker sat down and another rose, very few even condescended to look up from their papers, to see who it might be.

I am just going out again to endeavour to get my two friends settled and will keep the letter open to tell you of the result.

After lingering about the government offices all day, I have at last put the thing into a train which I hope will be successful; Macredie at any rate I think certain

The Port Hope Canal Bill has passed both Houses.

To his Father

Fenelon, Feb. 2, 1834

I forget whether I told you that I had traced the owner of the land I was in quest of to a person residing in Niagara. McCall and Macredie were going there, and certainly they might have enquired after the land themselves, but they seemed so undecided that I was afraid to lose sight of them, and then on their return, if they had determined on the thing, they would have nobody to assist them in getting choppers, etc. In short, after some deliberation I decided to accompany them, and with Wallis we set off in a waggon and reached Hamilton the second day. That evening Wallis and I went to Dundas. As you are so full of geology I suppose I must make some remarks upon the subject. Of course you have heard of the theory that Lake Ontario was formerly much above its present level; indeed I cannot conceive how any one, who has seen the extensive plain sixty or seventy feet or more above the Lake which is bounded by a most remarkable ridge, clearly traced from some 20 miles east of York to Niagara and thence to Rochester, can doubt of it. The Lake in those days must have had a very deep bay at Hamilton, for the ridge there runs back into the country a long way, forming an extensive valley of from two to three miles broad in which Dundas is situated. Down the plain between these ridges run three or four deep ravines winding through it and constantly crossing the roads. At the bottom of these is again a smaller plain with a stream winding through it, a perfect counterpart of the larger plain and ravines. I should imagine this betokens two distinct descents of the Lake; perhaps there was one still earlier, for the land on the top of the great ridge is almost a dead level for many miles until bounded by the higher land behind and is scarcely above the level of Lake Erie. If the two were ever joined what a magnificent Fall there must have been in those days somewhere on the St. Lawrence. Niagara looks as grand as ever—perhaps grander from its gigantic icicles, but the surrounding scenery loses most of its charms

The next day we returned having been six days on our tour. Wallis went on to Ohio. The land after all was not to be had, but McCall determined to buy the front and be contented with the remainder of his land behind at some distance. At York we found Jameson, and all returned together, I with Jameson in his sleigh and the other two driving up Wallis's. Sleighing surely is not the correct name for the mode of travelling that day; there has been no snow on the ground for ten days and six inches of mud did not make up for the loss; however we proceeded in hopes of reaching Windsor* whence we proposed [blank in the original] back by the Scugog. But after eighteen miles walking alongside of our sleighs it grew dark and we were obliged to put up at a tavern in Pickering. From here we struck back into Uxbridge, having some tolerable sleighing after the first ten miles from the Lake. The next day one of our sleigh runners, being worn out by the bare roads, gave way and detained us so long that we could only reach a miserable farmhouse in Brock. The following day on the confines of Mariposa we broke down in such a way that no blacksmith could ramp us up again. Committing the pole and our luggage to the other sleigh we mounted the horses until after five or six miles we fell in with a sort of vehicle called a jumper which we purchased for the enormous sum of half a dollar. With our pole which we strapped on and a basket of mine for a seat we considered ourselves fortunate and drove in grand style to Purdy's Mill that night. You will not form any very high idea of a jumper from the price we gave, but I can assure you it is a most admirable conveyance and most properly called a jumper. Why it should differ so much from other sleighs I do not know but a better practice for learning a hunting seat cannot be imagined. It sticks at nothing, wherever the horses can scramble the jumper can leap after them. We certainly fell off several times at first but at last we gained such confidence that, approaching Purdy's Mills, we resolved to show off, and putting the horses to full speed, successfully cleared a sawlog or two and a heap of firewood and finally deposited ourselves in the mud just opposite Purdy's door, to the no small amusement of a crowd of bystanders. Next day we continued our journey, but had not proceeded three miles when it became evident that we had trusted too much to the jumping powers of our carriage; its best days were clearly over—one of the runners was on its last legs; no blacksmith however was required here; an axe and an auger were all the tools wanted and in about an hour we started again, though from our inexperience of the art of carriage building the runner was but weakly. We now no longer went out of our way to jump logs but with all our care we broke down once more, and as the other sleigh had gone on we were obliged once more to take to our horses leaving our luggage behind. Two or three and twenty miles on bare backs with the additional pleasure of harness were enough to teach us for the future not to jump too high, and though I shall not cease to up-

hold the excellence of jumpers I will be content with exhibiting them on a level road and not attempt to clear sawlogs again.

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* The former name of Whitby.

On arriving at Peterborough we found a Bachelors' Ball in preparation which went off with great éclat. I certainly never expected on coming to Canada that I should be one of the Bachelors who gave a ball to between eighty and ninety, and meet with two of the best waltzers I ever figured with. A tremendous thunderstorm luckily coming on we kept it up with unabated vigour till daylight, as there are no covered carriages in Canada. After the ball, McAndrew and I with our new neighbours hired a sleigh to Purdy's and the same day reached his house soon after dark. The next morning early I set out in hopes of finding my people in bed, but upon more mature consideration dawdled by the way in order to find them at breakfast. I arrived about eight but it seems I had been discovered on the Lake, the bird I wanted to find had flown. My house had been opened in my absence upon the plea that my property was getting damaged in consequence of the wet getting in during the thaw. Yesterday I made no remark but I made my own researches and persuaded the man whose arm I set to tell me what had been going on, and the result is this.—My gun and one of my buffalo robes have been used and my skates are at this moment in my worthy servant's box; about one pound of tea and two of sugar have evaporated; my whiskey has been tapped, to what extent I know not; and what is the worst of all, and what I expected, having dreamt of it at Niagara, I have been keeping a great Scotchman for three weeks and he had not left my shanty five minutes when I arrived. The King's evidence is not to be brought in if possible and my own discoveries are not very important but I have great hopes of the skates bringing something to light. To-morrow morning I shall hold a court of inquiry and dismiss them both immediately. The boy I may dismiss at once, but the man is engaged till the 1st of May. If I can bring all home to him of course I need not pay him his wages beyond to-day; but, if my man will not inform, I can only bring positively the opening my house and using my gun and buffalo robe home to him, and I question whether he may not compel me; at any rate he shall sue me for it, but I have great hopes in the skates. Whatever may be the result of my judicial labours to-morrow they must both go and I do not mean to have another servant till the new emigrants begin arriving when I shall take a man and his wife. My choppers are going down in a week or so and will not be back till the end of next month but I care little for that; I have lived long enough in the woods to be quite contented alone, my washing being the only thing I have an objection to do myself, and that I can get done by McAndrew's woman. I shall bake bread and boil a mess of potato soup twice a week, and the latter warmed up and cold pork will satisfy me; chopping firewood will be a pleasant variety. McAndrew will come over occasionally to see if I am alive and I shall invite McCall and Macredie to spend a day or two and initiate them into some of the mysteries of the backwoods. I rather enjoy the thoughts of the thing, but nevertheless I wish I had a dog. To-morrow I shall give you more particulars, I must now turn my attention to airing my bed, for last night, after my work was done, I was so sleepy that I preferred a blanket on the

floor, being the 13th night since I had my clothes off save one intervening night.

March 7th, 1834. The day after I concluded my last I got rid of my establishment without having to call in any evidence. The skates, it seems, had been borrowed by the boy and taken from him by the man to hold over him *in terrorem* in case he told tales. A mutual recrimination, which they were asked for, let out many secrets; so I paid them their wages and dismissed them at once, no objections being made. I am sorry for the boy who I believe was only in fault as to going out skating one day, but I could not have kept him alone. It seems that the very day I went away my house was broken open. Ever since I have been alone, with the exception that the day before yesterday the three Macs came to dine with me. I cannot say I am tired of my solitude yet, though the washing up and the baking of bread are not occupations for which I feel any fondness; however I dare say I shall have enough of it before I get a servant again.

When I left off at the end of the former sheet I imagined that I had a great deal more to say, but I can only remember now one commission. Indian corn though the most profitable crop that there is when it succeeds has, particularly of late years, failed so generally throughout Canada on account of the late frosts that it is but seldom grown. Now I remember Mr. Parr speaking of a variety which they grew in the north of Italy which from its only requiring about fifty days to come to maturity he called I think "Cinquantaria." If by means of him or of any one else you could procure me some seed, I think you might not only benefit me but the whole of Canada—a glory which I think should recompense you for your trouble.

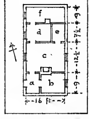
LIFE ON THE FARM

LETTERS OF 1834 AND 1835

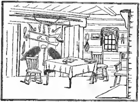
To his Father

Fenelon, April 4th, 1834

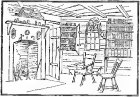
The great disadvantage of being at such a distance, after that of not seeing you, is that even by letter one cannot satisfactorily carry on a conversation. This truism has been elicited from me by the perusal of your letter of the 10th of December, which only reached me last week. The letter in answer to which you wrote was written I believe at the end of October, and it conveyed, I have no doubt, an accurate representation of my ideas and feelings at the time of writing; but your answer finds me with five months greater experience of the country and with views and feelings altered in many respects. We do not converse upon equal grounds; and I may add that during five months I have forgotten many things to which I alluded in my previous letter and hardly understand your allusions to them in your answer I am sure that my letters must often appear to be full of inconsistencies, at least if they are at all faithful pictures of my mind at the several times of writing; for the earlier ones were written of course in very considerable ignorance of the subjects I treated of, and the new lights which break in upon me from time to time often make great changes in my modes of thinking. In reading over my journal of my first months in Canada I have been surprised at the errors into which I have fallen; my letters home, being written at greater intervals, will I dare say be more correct; but still I have no doubt you will have detected the inconsistencies to which I allude...... Upon the subject of my house, the plan will stand thus:—



a Entrance,
b Workshop,
c Sitting room,
d Bedroom,
e Store room, from which are the entrances to the cellar and loft,
f Bedroom, a great part of which will be occupied with my chests, trunks, etc., and cupboards to hold linen and other articles. The roof of the house is now simply of boards, not imbricated but nailed on lengthwise, and a copious admission of rain is the consequence. As soon as the business of the barn is over I mean to get the roof shingled. The new roof and a fresh coat of mud in the interstices of the logs is all that I shall do, as I look upon it only as a temporary habitation for a couple of years, for, from the hurry I was in, it is but a poor affair and not worth any alterations, and besides is not in the situation which would be most desirable.



Interior of Cottage looking North



Interior of Cottage looking South

—Drawings by Anne Langton

Your observations upon servants generally are pretty correct, but I do not, as far as I have yet seen in my own and other establishments, see much difficulty in managing them; but here as in everything else *in medio tutissimus* is the only rule. The working classes here naturally feel an independence which you do not find at home, and which, if you give way as some do, will soon lead them to consider themselves your equals; others again, by endeavouring to keep them under as they call it, only give rise to insolence and make themselves cordially hated. But I have never seen any yet who by a quiet reserve of manner cannot be kept respectful. At particular moments and with particular characters you may unbend occasionally and thereby make yourself liked without losing any authority. The art of managing servants is perhaps the most important one a new settler has to learn; I do not mean to say I am perfect in it, but when I say that, out of the seven people I have at different times had, I never found any difficulty except with one, you must not suppose me the worst manager; and he who did give me annoyance was in all important matters managed easily enough, but in trifles and when not at work too much inclined to be free and easy, which considering that we had lived in the same shanty for six weeks and that I for a great part of the time had acted the menial part of cook, scullion, etc., is not much to be wondered at.

I think all your questions about my land have been answered in my former letters, but I will tell you what new discoveries I have made. In the first place I must explain to you how the land is surveyed, to make you understand the difficulty of—what may appear to you a simple affair—ascertaining the boundaries of a lot

Starting at the base of a township the surveyor runs the concession lines by compass, blazing the trees here and there along the line, and planting a post at the points where the imaginary lines which divide the lots cross the concessions. The concession lines run N. 17½° W. and the side lines I am told are not exactly perpendicular. The shores of the lake are surveyed in a very slovenly manner, so that no dependence can be placed in the supposed contents of the broken fronts, and the position of the creeks, etc., appears to be laid down merely by guess. Now walking through the bush at the best is hard work and in a swamp where the fallen trees lie upon one another in double and treble tiers and you can with difficulty see ten or twenty yards before you, it is not easy to proceed at a greater rate than a mile an hour. Moreover the blazes are now, I believe, eleven years old, many of the blazed trees are fallen, and in others the bark has covered up the wound; in difficult places they are generally very sparingly and irregularly scattered; add to which that many of the posts have entirely disappeared, and you will have some idea of the difficulty of the operation . . .

When I first came up I was fortunate enough to stumble upon the line between X and XI and the post between lots fifteen and sixteen, and with this guide I commenced building on the best situation I could find on what I knew must be my land. I had promises from two different surveyors during the winter to come up and run the lines, but neither made their appearance; and trusting to their coming and deterred by the difficulty of wading through three feet of snow whilst everything you touch precipitates a deluge of the same material down the back of your neck from the branches above, I never did anything towards surveying during the winter. Thus when I last wrote I knew nothing further of my possessions than at my first arrival.* During this last fortnight, however, I have taken advantage of the fine weather which has cleared off most of the snow, whilst the ice on the swamps is still strong enough to bear one—at any rate oftener than it lets one through into the water—and I have gained much more definite ideas than I formerly possessed.

I first discovered the boundary line of the two townships—no easy matter when your only chance is to take a walk through a thick forest in the hopes of seeing a tree from which a piece of bark about the size of your two hands has been cut eleven years ago (or nine—I don't know the date to a certainty) and these trees scattered in a line at twenty or thirty yards apart. However, I found it and pursued it a considerable distance both to the north and south but without finding a post, and with the other line which I had found in autumn I was not more successful. I now adopted a more tedious but surer plan; inviting Macredie to stay with me I started from the post I already knew, and measuring the line carefully I found the fourteenth post, the extreme south of my land; then striking off to the east by compass I fell in with the boundary line, and finding the fourteenth post after a minute search, rooted up and leaned against a tree at some distance from the line, we measured on again and successfully ascertained the position of the other posts as far as my land went. The result of this examination was in many respects far from satisfactory and left still much to be ascertained. . . . . The next step towards an accurate knowledge of my land was to resurvey the shore, in which there is certainly in one place an error and upon the correctness of which of course the contents of my broken front will depend. For this purpose I manufactured an instrument to serve me as a theodolite which of course was but a rude instrument and I consequently felt doubtful of the accuracy of my observations, but when upon calculating them I found that one distance which I measured by two perfectly independent sets of triangles, as a test, turned out by one 923.6 yards and by the other 925.4 I began to place as much reliance upon my survey as upon the Government maps. From these data I have drawn a map of the coast, but from not having ascertained with precision at what points the concession and side lines strike the Lake I cannot at present correct them. All this looks very easy on paper, but in practice, including a long day's post hunt for Mr. Wilson, and another expedition to run the line between X and XI S. to the Lake as a guide to McAndrew, it took up a whole fortnight and so completely deranged the regularity of my hours that one day we did not breakfast till twelve and dined at nine.

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* It seems that the remarks, at the beginning of the letter about the difficulty of conversing at a distance, were drawn forth by a criticism, in the letter he is answering, upon his having bought his land without having ascertained its boundaries

Since I have been left to myself my motions have been as like clockwork as those of a man who has no watch can be. I rise at an hour varying from five to seven. Having dressed I clean the house whilst the kettle is boiling and after breakfast I smoke a cigar and read as long as it lasts; I then wash up the accumulated plates, etc., of the twenty-four hours and set to work at chopping firewood, joinering or whatever may be in hand at the time. At an hour before sunset, which I have come to calculate very accurately, I begin cooking, bringing in a pile of firewood, sweeping out the house, etc., in the intervals; and I rarely fail to have finished my dinner just as it gets dark. Another cigar's time is then devoted to meditation and digestion, and after reading, writing or sewing for half a candle, I go to bed. My baking, which is performed in a frying pan before the fire, requires constant attention, so I superintend that in the evening, having kneaded the dough during my cooking hour. In such a mode of life there is nothing to occupy the space of a letter, and here at McAndrew's where, as there is no one left to endanger the sanctity of my dwelling, I have been spending a week, we are quite as methodical. He and I, who sleep on the floor, rise at 5 30, Macredie and McCall, who as strangers have the beds, are loath to get up before seven, and then till dinner we pursue our several avocations, which have not been interrupted by any amusing variety, except one day having the house on fire and another when we sallied out on a fruitless chase after four wolves, from whom we succeeded, however, in rescuing the carcass of a deer which they had just run down and which we conveyed home in triumph, and have feasted on venison ever since. This is the second deer which our hounds have run down for us this winter.

My journal therefore must be prospective. To-morrow I go home to make preparations for the rest who are to dine with me on my birthday, and to superintend an interesting event which is about to take place with my venerable nanny-goat, who will now, I hope, supply me with milk. As soon as the lakes break up I go to York or, as it is now named in the Act for incorporating it, Toronto, from whence I am to convey to Whitby an extremely miscellaneous assortment of articles for our end of the lake, each bearing his share of my ex penses; thence returning by Peterborough I am to meet the rest and help to bring up our new scow. The lake has not yet broken up, though the ice is very precarious in the middle of the day, but it cannot last more than a week. Nothing can exceed the beauty of the weather for this last month, once or twice for a day there has been heavy rain, but the rest has been the most delightful weather I ever experienced, with no mosquitoes to annoy one; it is almost worth coming to Canada to experience such a month. Since I have been here the door has been open from sunrise to sunset, though the lake lies in one unbroken sheet of ice within a few feet of us. The ducks are already crowding the rapids, the geese are daily going farther north and in a few days we shall be in the midst of a northern spring; with it unfortunately will come heavy rains and mosquitoes, but we must be content—it is not to be expected that we should have such days as this of which you have no idea in England, without some of the drawbacks from which you are exempt. To-morrow I believe this letter is to set off to meet Wallis. I must now stop and go to chop by the orders of my methodical host—if I find anything more to say I will [use] the remaining space to-night.

April 7th. Nothing new has occurred. The ice being very ticklish, McAndrew and I went on a reconnoitering expedition, I first, to try the strength, and he behind me, to throw himself on his face to assist me if I went through. This did not occur, but, as it was so rotten as to allow us to sink over shoetops as if in snow, we decided upon not going to my house and I kept my birthday here. To-day the ice has made very decided demonstrations of breaking up, having become detached at the edges, and the day after to-morrow I expect to go home in my canoe, which in contemplation of such an occurrence I dragged over the ice . . . .

I wish my mother would send me one or two plain receipts for preserving. We have plenty of wild raspberries, plums and cranberries, and I have found a few gooseberry bushes. Living as we do almost exclusively on salt pork some acids are much wanted. I have had a great longing for them all winter but my health has not suffered; some people break out in boils. I have made no sugar this spring, partly from having too many things to attend to and partly because I have been informed that, unless you have several women and children to attend to the trees, it did not pay. I have now changed my opinion and next spring I will make a good quantity. It is very good but has a slight bitterness—not at all disagreeable—and the molasses is much better than that from the cane—not unlike rather insipid honey.

To his Father

Cobourg, April 25, 1834

I arrived here from the city of Toronto at four o'clock this morning and as I cannot find conveyance to Peterborough till to-morrow I am going to employ my vacant time and vent my spleen in letter writing. But before I indulge in a tirade against the whole monetary system of this Province I must bring up my journal to the present time.

On the 8th of April then (I think I got you up to the 7th) the ice commenced loosening so much at the edges that we, like boys just escaping for the holidays, went upon it with long poles and amused ourselves for some hours in breaking it up and driving the broken pieces under the main body so as to form a narrow channel

along shore into which we could launch my canoe for the sole purpose of giving Macredie an upset. This may seem ridiculous enough to you, but if you had the lake closed with ice for five months you would have enjoyed once more the sight of a little open water.

The 9th. Having heard that the lake was open at the mouth of the Scugog I went through the bush to where McAndrew's boat had been left and explored the limit of the ice but found it unbroken in that direction. On my return at three in the afternoon I saw at about five miles off down the Lake a floating tree which indicated open water there, and, as a smart wind blew from that quarter, it rapidly advanced, and before we went to bed we had the pleasure of hearing the waves breaking upon the shores. The next morning there was not a piece of broken ice the size of your hand to be seen but it still remained firm from Sturgeon Point to the westward so as to stop my return by water. I embarked, however, in my canoe with three of McAndrew's men and landing on the opposite shore reached my house by land. At sunset that evening there was not a particle of ice from Cameron's Falls to Bobcajewonunk, and such is the rapidity with which spring comes, that the same day which witnessed the last of the ice produced the first flower, the first mosquito and the first black fly I had seen. I have been the more particular about the events of these few days because the ice is a subject of as much importance to us as the River Mersey is to Liverpool.

[The men from McAndrew's were borrowed to clear up round his house as a preparation of safety for the burn, which was part of the choppers' contract and might be carried out by them during his absence in Toronto. This and other operations, such as getting

down their oxen which had arrived at Purdy's, consumed the time until the 18th when, as agent for the four neighbours, he started for Toronto, which by way of canoe to Peterborough, steamboat to Rice Lake, stage to Cobourg, and steamboat again on Lake Ontario he reached on the 22nd.]

And now begin my griefs. To meet the purchases I was to make I was the bearer of two drafts from McCall and Macredie, the former on York accompanied by a letter of credit, the other ought to have been cashed for me in Peterborough, but this I soon saw was impossible. Cash at all times is a most rare article in Canada and now that the disordered state of the United States banks has thrown us all into confusion things have come to such a pass that people of known property refuse payment to their own bills with as much coolness as a dandy puts off his dunning tailor And to make matters worse, Mr. Bethune, the great man of our district, has just been declared a bankrupt; his failure is very severely felt, many of the monied emigrants have placed their funds with him and he has been a sort of savings bank for the poorer class. For some time he has been refusing payment, but the storekeepers believing him sound have been taking orders on him in cash and they are consequently taken in too. How he may wind up I cannot form an idea. One class hold him up as everything that is honourable, noble and generous, and they say his debts do not amount to £20,000 and that he can show undoubted security for £60,000. The other class doubt this much and don't scruple in private to call him a rascal. Many believe that it was he himself who robbed the Bank of U. C. of the £3,000 which were missing last autumn, when he was the cashier of its branch here. I know but little

of him personally, but he is an agreeable and gentlemanly person, and, though his own interest was doubtless at the bottom of it, has done more for the Newcastle district than any other living man. Be all this however as it may I do not believe that Sir Richard Arkwright himself could have raised £20 in Peterborough and Cobourg.

Still trusting to McCall's draft and some cash of my own I went on to Toronto, and after being put off for an hour or two on the plea of the cashier being absent, I was at length bowed out of the bank with the assurance that the names were perfectly good, but, etc., etc. In short the bank will not discount a halfpenny, and I got no money; so after spending the morning in making purchases of such things as appeared more immediately necessary, as far as I could spare the cash, I the next day embarked for this place, and mean to hasten back to the woods there to vegetate as well as I may until better times. To add to my melancholy this morning I have heard that during my absence Mr. Ferguson, the most respectable storekeeper and the kindest-hearted and best man in Peterborough, died suddenly after a few hours' illness; his loss will be greatly felt. by none more than by us backwoodsmen to whom his house was always a home when they came down to Peterborough.

Unless some radical change is made in the money matters of this country it will not be a country to live in. Property there is in abundance but no representative of it, and the former increases in much more rapid proportion than the latter, so that we are getting worse every day. A metallic currency I am afraid cannot be established amongst us yet as the balance of trade is so decidedly against us with the States, but a much more extended paper currency must be issued or there

will soon be a stop to all business. The bank issues are not half sufficient for the wants of the country, and they are under great restrictions in this respect from Government, but above all they are a monopoly. When they are refusing discount to every one else, the directors and their friends find favour in their sight; they are a monopoly, not by statute but by the circumstances of the country. There are few men in Canada with capital sufficient to establish a private banking house of any extent and these few have their capital so locked up in mills, steamboats, land speculations, etc., that they cannot attempt it. And as for joint stock banks that was tried and failed last session. It passed the lower house indeed but a majority of the Legislative Council are either bank directors or shareholders and they threw it out. A private bank—or more—must be established with English capital and I think the country holds out the fairest prospects to them. Property, as I said before, there is in abundance—much more property and more generally diffused than in England in proportion. There is scarcely a man in Canada who has not tangible property of some kind and our Register offices prevent any fraud in this respect, as no deed or mortgage is valid that is not registered. During several years that Mr. Bethune was cashier of the Cobourg branch, though the discounts were then much more freely given than of late years, delay indeed frequently occurred, from the want of a circulating medium, but during the whole of that time the actual loss upon discounted bills was only £200 or £300. When the risk is so small, six per cent. offers, I think, a temptation. Then, if a low rate of interest were allowed on deposits, all that specie which yearly comes out from England with the emigrants to be locked up in their chests would be deposited with any substantial bank and all the remittances to and drafts on England would pass through their hands. The exorbitant profits on exchange which the bank exacts have thrown all that business where practicable into the hands of the Montreal merchants. When exchange was at five per cent. at Montreal not more than one and one-half or two could be obtained at Cobourg and in one case I know that only par was obtained. The bank have found their monopoly pretty profitable, twenty-six per cent. having been divided last year. I do not wonder at the Legislative Council throwing out the Bill for establishing a joint stock bank at Cobourg. In a former letter I remember saying I was growing a Tory—I feel myself fast approaching to Radicalism again, but not of that sort of which that little factious wretch Mackenzie is leader. I don't know whether you ever heard of him; he has been lately over in England with a budget full of grievances and we here think he has been making a great noise with you; when I first came out the first question everybody asked me was—"What do they think of Mackenzie in England?" and I was stared at when I said I had never heard of him. He is a little red-haired man about five feet nothing and extremely like a baboon but he is the O'Connell of Canada. They have expelled him from the House of Assembly and elected him Mayor of the City of Toronto. But to return to banking—it has been some time reported that some of the London nobs are going to send out a house and that the buildings are already purchased in Toronto—I was just going to say the ground was purchased, but then you might have imagined it proposed to send the house out ready built from London—a speculation so singular that it might have made you look with suspicion on the whole report This may do something for us—God knows we need it.

In one of your letters, if not your last, you express some apprehension about my canoe. Now a canoe[*] is certainly a little light affair that you can carry for a mile or two upon your shoulders and which a single false step in embarking or disembarking will upset, but it will carry half a dozen men in safety over a stormy lake and when you get accustomed to the craft you feel as steady as in a seventy-four. Indeed the other day, so much does habit make one unconsciously keep one's balance, that though I attempted it frequently I could not upset my canoe when Macredie was out with me in it, and it was not till I had got out that his awkwardness in attempting to do the same enabled me to give him the desired ducking. Indeed there is only one case, except by gross carelessness, in which there is any danger in a canoe, viz, if you bring her broadside to the sea in rough weather, when she is very apt to swamp. A boat is in most cases a preferable craft, you can carry a greater load, you need not handle it like a new-born baby, you go quicker and defy all winds. In a canoe unless the wind is dead aft it is always in your way, particularly if alone, and even with the greatest care she is constantly getting a leak But then in fine weather she is so easily launched, and paddled with such ease and silence if you want to steal upon a duck, etc You cannot take a boat upon your shoulders and carry it over any obstacle such as Cameron's Falls or the pitch at Bobcajewonunk, and in coming up even a practicable rapid in a boat you may indeed put out your whole strength, but you have to keep the middle of the stream with barely room often to ply your oars, whereas in a canoe you may go anywhere which will admit the narrow bark itself, and steal up the sides of the stream taking advantage of the eddy caused by every stone and stump, and by stepping out with one foot keep her floating in two inches of water. Each has its own advantage and I have both to use as occasion may require

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[*] A bark canoe

I shall be very glad to give you a paper for the Lit and Phil. Soc. if anything occurs worth noticing; perhaps you can suggest some point upon which my limited experience will enable me to hold forth to them, and I will direct my attention to it If you belonged to the Manchester set I could give you Aurora Borealis enough to surfeit even old Dr Dalton . . . .

My space is growing so limited that I must be laconic, but the honey must not be forgotten I might indeed collect a keg of the molasses of the maple sugar, and having flavoured it with wild herbs I might make honey such as my father loveth, but I am afraid you would detect the cheat; real honey I cannot promise. The honey bee is not a native of N. America and, though numerous swarms have established themselves in the woods and have become naturalized on the confines of civilization in the Western States, I hear of none in Canada; I even shall find difficulty in procuring the hives which I mean to locate on Sturgeon Lake; if their produce turns out to be deserving of the carriage you may depend upon the first fruits . . . . .

To his Father

Fenelon, May 24, 1834

[The previous letter was written from Cobourg on his way home from Toronto This gives an account of

the journey from Peterborough, the little adventures of which are so characteristic of such journeys that it is a pity to omit them.]

Early on the 29th, I set off, accompanied by Edward Caddy, a very nice lad who is living with a brother settled in Douro, and we had a prosperous voyage till we got to Pigeon Lake, where of course there was a high wind and of course against us. About the middle of the lake Caddy, who had never been in a canoe before, got the cramp from his kneeling position and I had hard work for half an hour to keep us from retrograding whilst he was recovering. In consequence of this and a subsequent rest when we got under shelter of the other shore, Mr. Frazer, who was in company with us in a boat, got an hour's start of us; but about a mile below Bobcajewonunk we came up with them; they had been beaten back ten different times from one point in the river by the current. We in the canoe got up easily, and, meeting one of the choppers at the tavern, I sent him down to their assistance, but Mrs. Frazer had to be left in the bush until her husband returned to fetch her up by land. Sturgeon Lake is hardly a place for ladies yet.

As there was not enough daylight left to get our canoe up the rapids, we were obliged to spend a long evening at the tavern, which was unusually full in consequence of a house-raising in the neighbourhood; the dimensions of the building (the tavern) are twelve feet by twenty-two, in which space twenty-three human souls, including three married couples and two unmarried females found sleeping room. Mr. and Mrs. Frazer, I must observe, walked on to Sawers'. . . .

[Some cold weather in May, a little later, is also worth recording, as a part of a visit to Peterborough.]

The 8th, we [three guests with McAndrew, McCall and himself] left McAndrew's in two boats and, calling at Mr. Frazer's on the way, we reached Bobcajewonunk before nine, and sent back my boat with a family whom McAndrew had engaged to chop for me in Peterborough.

The steamer was just starting on her first trip of the season and we raced with her down Pigeon Lake, keeping ahead of her all the way to Billy McQue's where we stopped a while. As we were six in the boat and could only pull two oars you may imagine what her speed is. We got to Peterborough to dinner. From then to the thirteenth, we remained in Peterborough making purchases, which until then we could not get carried out to Chemong Lake. On the fourteenth, we were ready to start when lo! there were icicles three feet long hanging from the houses, snow four inches deep, and sleighs going about as if in winter. There never was such weather on record; lucky it is for those who have no crops growing. I don't know what the thermometer was, but I think it must have been below twenty. I am afraid I must give up praising our climate. The rapid change from twenty on the fourteenth, to eighty-eight on the twenty-third will frighten the people of your more temperate regions. The thermometer was at eighty-eight in the shade yesterday before twelve o'clock, what it might rise to afterwards I don't know. However, being rather lightly clothed we did not care to face the snowstorm and did not leave Peterborough till the fifteenth, the ground being hard frozen.

Upon arriving to breakfast on Chemong Lake we found our scow had not yet been brought there according to promise, and, as McCall was useless from a bad hand, McAndrew and I did not like to undertake bringing her down from five miles off by ourselves and then continuing our journey with almost a certainty of having to camp out on the road without blankets; so as the steamer was just starting we got all our things on board and got to Bobcajewonunk before five. Leaving most of our luggage there we got up the rapids with as much as our boat would hold, with the intention of getting forward to McAndrew's to sleep; but in passing Need's about five o'clock, the sight of a deer which the wolves had just driven into the lake and he had killed, together with his pressing invitation, arrested us.* We had had nothing to eat since breakfast and were wet and cold, the idea of arriving at McAndrew's at eleven at night and having to light a fire and cook our supper was not cheering. However as it was we had better have gone on, for Need's fire would not burn, and what with skinning and cutting up the deer it was one o'clock in the morning before we got supper; and to crown our misfortunes Need does not keep any spare blankets, so McAndrew and I had to sleep on the floor in our wet clothes, after many fruitless attempts to get the fire to burn.

We were off before anybody was stirring and got to McAndrew's for breakfast, and in the afternoon I went home in my boat with a most unruly cargo, consisting of a pig and six fowls together with some more manage-

able bags of flour, oats, etc. In the middle of the Lake the pig got her legs loose and dire was the scuffle before I could get her down again and get her manacles adjusted. In her struggles she had kicked out some rags with which a leak had been temporarily stopped up till I can get a supply of oakum and pitch, and I had to stop every ten minutes to bale out, until by shifting my cargo to one side so as to bring one gunwale almost to the water, I contrived to keep the leak above water, not however without imminent danger of drowning my pig in the water which still filled the bottom of the boat. The pig though a bad sailor is nevertheless a good pig, a very tractable animal except for a great fondness for coming into the house. As for want of oxen I have not yet been able to fence in my garden, I cannot fairly object against her the rooting up my onion bed. The hens might as well have remained at Peterborough, for the brush heaps afford so many convenient hiding places that I have not yet found an egg; indeed one of the poor creatures would have been much better there, for she this morning served as breakfast to a fox or marten. I have finished the frame of a hen-house but until I get up some of my boards* from McAndrew's I cannot give them effectual shelter.

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* The killing of this deer, together with "a sudden and extreme change of temperature" while snow was on the ground, is mentioned by Need under the date of May 17. Need's book is spoilt by an excessive reserve about other people, and he makes no mention of his guests on this occasion or of the adventure of preparing the deer for food, but his narrative is evidently an account of the same day as that here noted as the 15th. Both diarists occasionally lost a day. Need crossed the lake on Monday to attend the Church Service a friend held on Sunday. John Langton, p. 164, discovers he has dated his letter wrong.

The 17th. I began digging up a garden, a most laborious operation, for there is such a tangled mass of roots to be cleared away that the axe and the pickaxe with the assistance of the hands almost supersede the use of the spade. What I have done behind the house is, however, thoroughly cleared and is reserved for those plants which require a well cultivated soil; the front of the house I have left for Macredie (who came up this day to stay a few days with me), and it will produce some things until I have time to get the whole thoroughly cleared.

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* During his absence in Toronto the three Macs had brought down from Purdy's saw mills two rafts of boards, each containing 10,000 ft. which were to be divided among the four neighbours

The 18th, Sunday, we spent much of the day on the lake as being the coolest place.

The 19th. My choppers had not yet returned and as we had had a few days of dry weather I was afraid to lose the opportunity and resolved to burn their chopping without them. If the burn turned out a bad one, of course they would have come upon me for the damage, but the fear of being quite too late for potatoes overcame my doubts and, getting the assistance of my new choppers, we soon had it in a blaze; about half an hour afterwards my men arrived. As it turned out we should have done much better to have waited a few days, but, as the men acknowledged that they were hurrying up to burn that day, I am relieved of all responsibility. It has been a very poor burn in many parts and in my own chopping it has not burnt at all, so that I don't think I shall get more than seven or eight acres ready for a crop out of the fifteen or more that are down, the rest will have to wait for the autumn, but I shall get in my potatoes and turnips and probably some oats for the straw. Indeed upon new land the oats seldom bring much grain to perfection but the straw is most luxuriant and is almost indispensable for fodder in the winter . . . .

The next three days Macredie and I worked at the garden, and yesterday, having at last got hold of Jameson's scow, I went over to McAndrew's and brought up my oxen, which I have never before been able to get across the lake since we brought them down. To-day we drew off the logs which encumbered the ground of my garden and drew in logs to split up for rails, so that as soon as I get a man to help me I shall have a chance of getting it fenced in and into some decent order. The three Macs are gone down to-day in the scow to bring up our flour, etc., from the rapids. On Monday we go to Ops to bring down potatoes, and there I mean to hire a man; and on Wednesday we all go to Peterborough to buy McCall's and Macredie's land, to bring up our scow, and to get some pork, for we are beginning to be threatened with scarcity. Next week I shall have twelve mouths to feed and I have not above 150 pounds of pork left; McAndrew has been for some time borrowing a few pounds at a time; Jameson, who used to be our principal reliance in case of want, has twenty or thirty hands employed building his saw mill, and at the lower end of the lake there is an absolute famine, Need, after borrowing as much as anybody would lend, had eaten his last piece of pork to dinner the day he killed the deer. I am loath to leave home just now, especially as my oxen are but in poor condition and I am afraid of the men overworking them at the logging, but as I have escaped going down to Bobcajewonunk to-day I am afraid I must bear my share of bringing up the new scow.

You ask as to my plans of proceeding. I think that my former letters will have given you hints at different times from which you can gather my intentions pretty accurately, but I will now tell you more connectedly what my mode of operations will be.

I have now chopped (at a guess for it is not yet measured) about eleven acres by my first contract,✓ about five of my own, and Abraham Fitchett, the new chopper I mentioned, is to have fifteen more ready for fall crop. Then there will be about fifteen acres more along the lake shore which I shall get done during this summer and winter, partly by contract, partly by my own man, to open my present clearing to the lake; about ten or twelve acres of this will be light chopping, principally young timber on an old windfall or burn and will have to be a summer before burning. This will make an opening from forty to fifty acres and most of this will be down in wheat and rye this fall and will be sown with grass in the spring. After this I propose to contract for ten acres every year and my own man may get perhaps about three more down; part of this will of course be got ready by the spring and the whole down in wheat in the fall. Fitchett, who has a large family, wants to buy some land of me and has proposed to clear sixty acres for 300, which at fourteen dollars an acre is equal to 14/- for the land.* The offer is not a bad one and if, upon further acquaintance, I am satisfied with the man's character I think we may make a bargain, but I will not have more than ten or at the most fifteen acres chopped annually until hands are more easily to be got. I would sell him for instance 200 acres for ten acres cleared annually for five years, which reckoning interest on the instalments would be a trifle less than he offers. But this is a parenthesis. The first crop of wheat ought nearly to pay the √ expense of clearing the land, and, if you [get] a crop off in the summer before wheat is sowed, it should quite cover the expense. You then have the land in grass for four years before you attempt to plough, for if you try a second crop unless it be potatoes or corn (Indian), which being planted in hills you can hoe between, it is choked up with weeds from the impossibility of ploughing new land, and moreover all the stumps will send up suckers and you will have to cut and burn them again. When in grass the cattle will keep the suckers down of every tree except basswood. At the end of four years, or, on a summer's chopping or fallow, in three, you may get in the plough and each year some of the stumps come out. The first ploughing after so short a time is a laborious and expensive business, but the stumps will rot out the faster. After the plough has been got in you may follow of course any plan of cropping which may appear desirable but grass is the only thing to succeed your first crop on the greatest part of your land

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* In the old currency a shilling was the equivalent of 20 cents.

Now it appears, upon the plan I have sketched, that in the last year before I should get the plough into the land I am to have in wheat this fall, I should have eighty or ninety acres in grass and only fifteen in any other kind of crop, or, allowing five acres of the last year's chopping to be in spring corn, twenty acres, and this seems disproportionate; but it appears to be the opinion of every one I have spoken to that the rearing and feeding of cattle is the most profitable mode of farming in this country, and that, even after the plough can be got in, a grazing farm would be preferable to an arable one; and if the fully stocking so large a portion of grass land should appear to require too large an outlay of capital, I will observe that there will be many new settlers who, having no grass of their own, will be glad to put out their cattle, and that, besides a large quantity of hay being required for one's own cattle during our long winter, hay is an article which bears a higher proportionate price than any other produce, except in new townships potatoes, which were last year selling in Ops at as high a price per bushel as much of their wheat fetches this year.

You are very hard upon us and our slovenly ways of building, etc., but it seems to me you do not make sufficient allowances for the difference between a new and an old country, or for the hurry in which things are obliged to be done in a first settlement. Labour is dear, and the hands you employ, from being obliged to do a little of everything, are not very perfect at anything, so that you cannot afford the expense of, and cannot get the men to perform, first rate work at any rate. The cornering and hewing of a well built log house is [? not] perhaps as nice work as your Russian mode of fitting the logs,* but the one your men have been accustomed to and the other they have never seen. If you set them to any strange kind of work you must make up your mind to pay doubly and have worse work into the bargain; besides a man who has been sleeping in the open air with all his luggage under no better shelter than a cedar tree is glad to get under any sort of roof which will keep out the rain; and having spent a fortnight in a doorless, chimneyless, unchinked shanty he is equally in a hurry to get into something more worthy of the name of a house. Then as to the time which the building of my house took, a person who is living in England or Russia, who has his regular carpenters and masons, together with horses and carts to bring his materials, all at hand, is very apt to overlook the difference of our situation—the ground has to be cleared, the logs have to be cut here and there, to be carried on men's shoulders and raised to their places by mere human force; trees have to be split and hollowed out into troughs to form the roof; boards have to be fetched from a saw mill sixteen miles off and then carried a quarter of a mile on your shoulders; the cellar has to be dug; the stones for the chimney must be collected, and carried by hand sometimes a considerable distance, and, if you are unfortunately late in the season, the clay which is to cement and plaster your walls must be mixed with boiling water and worked before a fire, and you must keep a fire in the chimney whilst building to keep your cement from freezing. Then—your men may be lamed with a cut, etc., etc., which would be tedious to detail, but which taken collectively form no small impediment to one's progress, more especially the wounds which in frost will hardly ever heal, so that the scratches which in an ordinary way one would never think of, by accumulating sometimes make one's hands almost useless; we were once obliged to give up bread, none of us having a band fit to knead with.

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* The frequent allusions to Russia are due to his father's impressionable youth having been spent there. No doubt the building of log houses in Russia, and the heating of them, operations centuries old, impressed him by their perfection, a perfection from which the backwoods methods were far removed

Upon this subject of bread you are severe upon us too and have insulted us by offering a present of Robinson Crusoe. His oven no doubt was a very good one, but we in Canada have one quite as good . . . . .

But Rome was not built in a day; at first we had so much on our hands that we had no time to think of raising bread, besides that the frost operates much against the making of leaven; at last, however, we got some barm with the assistance of hops, etc., and, though in a hurry I still occasionally resort to the dough cakes, I am now setting as good bread as any in Liverpool. Our oven, or—as it is called—a bakepan, is a round pan with a flat bottom and flat lid, under which a few cinders are put and some more on the top, and it bakes as well as Robinson Crusoe could desire. The dough cakes are not as you seem to think a sort of fried dough, though that was what we had recourse to when we could not knead, but round thinnish cakes of good dough put into the bottom of a frying pan which is reared up before the fire with some hot coals behind it, and thus it is half toasted, half-baked—very palatable I can assure you, particularly if mixed with a little pork fat.

Then you recommend to rub the pease through a sieve—but where is the sieve? And my mother suggests the potatoes being boiled separately—but I have only one pot. When I give a feast I am hard put to it for want of culinary utensils, but, with a little contrivance, I have managed on two occasions to produce six dishes. Thus, the pot may first half boil potatoes to be afterwards sliced and fried after the pork; it may then half boil a piece of beef which may be finished in a rude sort of Dutch oven, whilst the pot once more does duty with a stew of porcupine and rice; in the meantime the bakepan having finished a loaf may bake a venison pie and a cranberry tart; and without much difficulty fried fish and a devilled duck or partridge may be added, all which with the addition of cheese will make a very handsome dinner for the backwoods.

By the bye of cooking and eating which *unaccountably* fill a large space of my letters, for I am sure in practice they are very little attended to, excepting on the occasion of the before mentioned feasts when any strangers come up, and occasionally one amongst ourselves on birthdays, etc., or when we have got something particular, just to keep us in practice. Sometimes for form's [sake] I lay the cloth and take my meals regularly, but generally when Macredie is not

with me I take no regular meals; perhaps there may be some cold pork, or I fry some cold potatoes, but I never have any cooking till after dark, the loaf of bread and a tea pot full of cold tea being always ready if I feel hungry during the day, which, however, seldom happens. The baking, which I always disliked and which is a great interruption, I have lately transferred to Mrs. Grey; and the other bore, the washing up, unless Macredie comes, who shines in that line, I do all in a lump when I have used up my stock of plates, etc. In truth I am almost tired of living alone. But as I was saying by the bye of eating, we are beginning to improve in that respect; venison is not yet in season and maskinongs has just gone out for a month or two, but the pigeons are beginning to be numerous, partridges may be had at half an hour's warning, though it is rather a shame to shoot them at present, and a stray duck falls in one's way every now and then. The other day I shot a porcupine which upon the second trial I pronounce very good eating, and, what is better, there is a great deal of solid substantial food on them; there is a peculiar smell and taste about the meat which I judged it prudent to mitigate by parboiling, but after that he made a most excellent stew. The beast to my surprise was in the top of a tree, and, if you wish more acquaintance with him his name is Hystria dorsata. Then I have a kid ready for the butcher in another week, and about a fortnight after expect a goodly family of little pigs, which, with what I may shoot and with the eggs, chickens and ducks I may have, and my goat's milk after the death of her kid, will supply me with an occasional variety from salt pork. But our great dependence at present is the black bass. Remembering your enquiries about the creature I went out yesterday (to day is Sunday the 25th) and caught one. First having examined it, I pronounce it to belong to the family of Percoides, of the order Acanthopterygii, to have the ventral fins below the pectoral, to have only one dorsal fin, six bronchial rays and numerous crowded teeth. I believe it to be of the genus Pomotis of Cuvier; the species my authority does not enable me to determine; and secondly, having eaten it, I decide that it is an excellent fish. Water zoutje we have not yet tried, but from the gelatinous nature of the gravy which fills a dish upon which cold fish has been left I think it may succeed. Whatever the scientific name of the fish may be, its American name is Black Bass, the same if I remember right which is immortalized by Cooper in the Pioneers. When maskinonge comes into season I will tell you all I can discover with regard to them . . .

I do not propose giving Billy McQue a spade; I do not see what use he has for it except to take out the ashes.

I want nothing particular from England.

May the 28th As I have still some room left I will fill it with my journal up to the present time, and it is fortunate for me that I have not to occupy the space by contradicting my last sentence saying that instead of nothing I want everything . . . . .

[This is said because, while visiting McAndrew, he received news that they were burning the brush at his place.] As this [he says] had already been finished ten days ago I was rather uneasy, but thinking my house pretty safe I went on loading the scow till the arrival of Fitchett with intelligence that the fire, which has been smouldering in old logs ever since my burn,

had broken out with the high wind and that the cedar swamp in front of my house was all in a blaze. Having removed everything from Grey and Reilly's shanty, which was in the greatest danger, he had left two of his boys with orders to watch the progress of the fire and break open my house if the danger increased. I jumped into the first boat that came in my way and pulled off directly; Grey followed with Fitchett and his son, and soon after Macredie and McInnes put off after me. Having fallen [on] a most miserable abortion of a boat and the wind being very high I landed as soon as possible and struck off through the bush, being much assisted by my new road which I fell in with Grey and I, having the one a wife and child and the other his property at stake, far outstripped the rest and had got most of the contents of my house out before assistance arrived. When we reached the bottom of the hill, from the top of which I knew we should ascertain our fate, we moderated our pace; I must say I felt very philosophical, receiving great consolation from the recollection that I had lent Jameson the day before eleven plates; but upon reaching the top of the hill my house gladdened my sight—entire—though Grey's was a heap of ashes. He is now however domesticated in my vacant shanty and does not appear to have lost anything but one knife and fork.

When I was living here alone I had always planned that if a fire took place I would threw everything down into the cellar; but my cellar is now unfortunately, really a cellar and not a well, so we removed all the heavy articles outside, and, having carried up a lot of empty barrels to the middle of the clearing, we carried up sacks full of the loose articles and filled them there.

We have now I think, by keeping the ground well wet, set certain bounds to the fire which it will not transgress while the wind remains in the present quarter at least; but fallen trees having since choked up my road to the lake we shall be ill off for water in case it increased. However towards sunset the wind generally dies away and we have a fair promise of a rainy night, so that I have carried everything back into the house, but kept them packed up in readiness to remove at a moment's notice; and having taken a couple of hours sleep I am now ready to sit up all night to watch. If the wind changes before rain comes the house must go, but I shall have time to save the contents.

Of course I shall not go down to-morrow to Peterborough but must get my business done by some of the rest. Macredie I am momentarily expecting to come back for my instructions and this letter.

This is but a tantalizing conclusion to a letter, and I am almost sorry now that I did not reserve to-day's occurrences for a beginning to my next; but it is one of the evils of the backwoods, which, when one has been living for a week surrounded by fires, one thinks much less of [fire] than you will. However you may console yourself with this—that should the house be burnt I am not at all alarmed for the contents; and though I should not like to lose the £20 it may have cost, I can now build a much better for the money. I will write again in a fortnight to tell you the result and perhaps this letter may not get off till that can be known—for when I left McAndrew's there were fires burning so near it that I should not leave it to-morrow if it were mine, and I should think he will not. But what with the party there now and his men he has so many hands that there cannot be much danger.

P. S Peterborough, May 31st. All danger being over and three more men having arrived to help at my logging I came down here yesterday.

To his Father

Fenelon, 13th June, 1834

You seem to wonder that we do not buy our goods at Peterborough. Mr. Ferguson was an excellent worthy man, but a very bad storekeeper; he went upon the old Canadian system of enormous profit and almost unlimited credit; this might be almost necessary formerly, but now when cash is more plentiful those who have it are not content to give cash for credit prices. The merchants at York and in the front soon found out this and reduced their prices for cash accordingly, but the new system had not travelled into the backwoods when we made our purchases last year; they talked indeed of cash, but it was the old Canadian cash, viz., six months and—a bittock. There is a great deal of difference between cash and down upon the counter. Mr. Wark had just arrived last year and was perfectly well inclined to take the credit prices, though he was understood to be equally for payment of them in cash. But Mr. Wark though very shrewd is a man of business and saw through the evils of the system; when we had found out the way by the Scugog river he came forward with a proposal to deal with us at really cash prices, but always under an injunction of secrecy, being unwilling to lose the benefit of the—almost—monopoly, which since Mr. Ferguson's death he holds of those to whom the Scugog is not so convenient. We agreed to his proposals, and I hope may now get our supplies from thence at moderate rates, which will be

the more convenient to us, as he is establishing a store at Bobcaygeon, so that he can deliver us our goods there. (You see I have altered my spelling once more in obedience to common usage, though the other accords better with the Indian pronunciation; in common parlance we call the two channels for shortness Great and Little Bob.) I do not place implicit reliance on Mr. Wark alone, but we are going to have another large establishment at the head of which will be Mr. Ferguson's brother. They have purchased the Peterborough mills for £8,000 from Mr. Hall, who four years ago paid £3,000 for them—about three times as much as he was worth in the world, and they are going to open in connection with them an extensive store. Between the two I consider Peterborough our market now, though it is a comfort to have a nearer road to Lake Ontario, and I think we shall not often have to resort to the front or to England to get things cheaper (excepting for very heavy articles), though we may get them better. I hope that the state of the money market last winter will have opened the eyes of Canada in general to the impolicy of the old credit system.

You will say that in my disquisition on the trade of Peterborough I talk more as if I was a merchant than a poor farmer. But I am a sort of merchant in my way, and the stores I have to get up amount to a sum which makes the difference between cash and credit prices of great importance. I have now thirteen persons to supply with all the necessaries of life, viz., two sets of men working on contract and two men on wages, and though I make a profit which remunerates me for my trouble and risk in bringing the goods up, I contrive generally to sell them cheaper than they could get them from a store in Peterborough.

The events of a stay at Peterborough always puzzle me in writing my journal. On Sundays we go to church and make calls and on week days drinking tea at Col. Brown's or the Fergusons is the only variety from wandering about from the blacksmith to the cooper, the shoemaker, the tin man, the mill and the different stores, fruitlessly endeavouring to hurry them on with what you want . . . . .

Your suggestion upon the subject of potatoes shall be tried; it reminds me of a receipt I got from Mr. McDonell: maskinonge is in full season in the winter and is then speared through the ice. When you get more than you want, of course in winter they will keep till there is a thaw, but then they go directly Now I am instructed to treat them thus: When you have a maskinonge to spare, boil a couple of dozen potatoes, peel them and mash them in the bottom of a barrel, strewing on plenty of salt and pepper; then boil your fish—practice only can tell you how much—but at a certain stage if you take him up by the tail and give him a gentle shake over the barrel all the flesh will fall off and leave the skeleton in your hand; lay this evenly and salt and pepper it again; repeat this operation till your barrel is full, then head it up and when all is hard frozen it will keep in a cool place good till the beginning of June. When any is wanted for use take out a sufficient quantity and fry it in little round cakes.

One thing I must complete this summer, which with you is a luxury but with us almost a necessity—an ice-house Even my kid, small as it was, was almost too much for me though I had a dinner party and two chance guests, hungry customers who had been walking through the bush all day. Without an ice-house we must absolutely live on fish, birds, or salt meat, for we

never could get through a good joint. Then with an ice-house one might keep ducks, pigeons, partridge, etc., which are plentiful in the fall, for winter's use when they are difficult to get, and one might have a better chance of keeping beer; even in winter there are occasional thaws for a day or two when one's stores would stand a bad chance.

Upon the subject of Billy McQue and his spade I must beg leave to have a discriminating power; he is a most hospitable old creature; I have known him, when he had not a mouthful in the house, buy some venison of an Indian, to satisfy a hungry guest, which he would never have asked for himself; but he has no use for a spade; and a bag of flour, which I gave him last winter, and mean to repeat this, is more than compensation for any damage his spade may have sustained.

By the bye I have had a bright idea Shall I call my house Pecoosheen, which being interpreted means Black Fly—a name by which, why and wherefore I cannot tell, I commonly go amongst the Indians. Pecoosheen of that ilk would sound well I think. . . .

June 18th I do not like writing home when I am in a bad humour for fear my letters may partake of the infection, but though I am in anything but a philosophic mind to-day I am driven by sheer ennui to continue my letter. My house is so closely packed with flour, oats, pork, potatoes, etc., that any indoors work is next to impossible, and as there is only one dry spot where I can bestow myself locomotion becomes very inconvenient. A general washing day is proverbially detrimental to placidity of mind and how much more so must be the state in which I now am which has all the disadvantages of wet, extending even to my bed, without at all promoting the cleanliness of anything

At the setting in of the thaw I thought myself badly off when I had to move my chair now and then to escape the driblets of water which from time to time found their way through the roof, but that was a luxury to my present state when the boards which cover my house have shrunk up with our June sun and now admit a copious flow of water fifty places at once. Yesterday I bore the rain with great philosophy, consoling myself with the good it was doing my potatoes, but to-day, when I have finished the old newspapers and reviews, settled my accounts and done all the odd jobs I can think of, I must own I am tired of being wet, day and night, and look forward with pleasure to such weather as we had last Sunday week when the thermometer stood at 92° in the shade. But my troubles in this respect will I hope be soon over, for I am going to have two men this week to shingle my house and add the other wing, and then, but not till then, I shall be able to get the interior properly and comfortably finished.

On Saturday the 21st, as I was going up to the Falls to fetch Capt. Dobbs down to dine with me and play chess, I met Jameson's scow coming down with two of his men and two strangers returning from the Falls, and, as I had promised Jameson to get him a load up from the Rapids, I returned with them. We dined at my house and drank tea at McAndrew's, waiting for the wind to fall. About 8 p.m. we continued our journey and camped out about eleven at the head of the Rapids; as I had been rowing near twenty miles that morning before I met the scow and had pulled all the way down I slept most soundly, but my companions, the gentlemen just arrived, complained of rain and other inconveniences of which I knew nothing

22nd. We went down in my boat and brought up in several trips the greater part of our load, but she is so out of repair at present, with carrying greater loads than she is calculated for, that she very nearly sunk with us twice and detained us a long time in patching her up. At night I preferred the bush to the dirt and noise of the tavern and camped out again with three Mohawk Indians on their return to the lower province with fifty beaver and other skins—£150 worth. I have often before spoken of the mosquitoes and my friends* the black flies, but there is another insect to which I am sure I have not done sufficient honour,—the midge, sandfly or gnat,—a diminutive little creature, scarce more than a black point. Its prick is like that of a needle and I had always despised it as beyond the first prick I never found any inconvenience from them; but when they come in tens of thousands it ceases to be a joke, and though I never yet have satisfactorily traced one of their bites to a spot, yet there are some five hundred to a thousand spots upon my hands, face, breast and other exposed parts to which I can ascribe no other origin. (I form this rough estimate from seventy-eight which I counted on one hand, and I am sure my breast has double that number; the people at the Rapids, which they principally affect, look as if in the measles.) These with a due admixture of mosquitoes and black flies, together with ants, upon a nest of which I happened to spend the night, rendered me abundantly uncomfortable; but having been up to my middle in water working hard all day I slept well notwithstanding. 23rd. As we had been detained so long I resolved to wait for the steamer in the evening in hopes of some new arrivals, and as we had time to spare I set the men to take up the rest of the load and took a holyday myself, during which I made great progress in an acquaintance with my new friends the Mohawks From them I learnt the art of making an extempore canoe of elm bark, in one of which, measuring 6½ by 2½ feet and about 2 inches out of the water, I amused myself by paddling about, and though loath at first to leave the smooth and shallow water I finally trusted myself with confidence in the roughest part of the Rapids. The Mohawk hunting country is not like ours intersected by great lakes and rivers, and they consequently encumber themselves rarely with canoes, but, if they come upon a stream, in a few hours they can make a canoe of this sort capable of holding twenty men. As we advanced in intimacy during the day, though our only medium of communication was imperfect French and a still more imperfect Missisauga interpreter, the old chief Uraguadire intimated his intention of making me a member of the Five Nations. He first commenced by an oration to his two companions, and then while he held my hand they all joined in a wild song and finally hailed me by the name of So-ja-ho'-wa-nen, the final n being a scarcely audible nasal. My new name being interpreted means "Un bien bon fen dans les bois"—truly a very good antidote for the Pecoosheens. They assure me that if ever I go to Cochnawaga or the Lake of the Two Mountains and mention my name I shall be recognized as a brother Indian.

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* Alluding to his Indian name.

The Mohawks are certainly a much finer specimen of the Indians than our Missisaugas, if I may judge from this sample. They were all three fine muscular men and the youngest, a nephew of the old chief, remarkably handsome . . . .*

Mr. Smith, the surveyor of our new township was down hunting for the boundary line of Verulam and Harvey, a continuation of which is to be his boundary, and (I mention it as showing how land was surveyed ten years ago) the 19th concession of Harvey is nowhere to be found. What are the poor people to do who have bought land in the 19th concession? I question much if Government will refund the money, or if they can get redress from the surveyor and his sureties.

I may as well mention another of our grievances. Last year Government contrary to the best advice raised the price of land at once from 5/- to 10/-, and now they find that they were in error and are talking of reducing it again. What are we to do who bought at 10/-? We certainly shall not get any of our money back and I doubt even if we get land in exchange. But with all this land keeps up its price, a lot was sold at 25/- the other day near me and not nearly as good land as mine. But it is only monied men who buy here; all the labourers are going to the West. Whatever they may do I am not afraid of losing my land, though it may be annoying to see others buying at half price; my vicinity to Cameron's Falls will always insure me a good price.

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* Need, under date of June 18 of this year, says "At the Rapids below the clearing, I fell in with three Indians of the Mohawk tribe, returning from the chase with a quantity of furs. One of them was Pierre, a celebrated model of Indian symmetry. I do not think I ever witnessed so faultless a form and figure, whether for beauty or strength."

These Mohawks, spoken of in a later letter as "great rascals by the way," were intruders upon the hunting grounds of the local Indians who were afraid of them in spite of, or perhaps because of the massacre spoken of on p. 23. Need says the local Indians annoyed him by camping on his land too close to his house. He did not like to drive them away, but when they appeared a second time he says, "I contrived to drop a hint or two of an expected visit from some Mohawk Indians. The intruders said nothing, and appeared to receive the intelligence with perfect indifference; but on rising next morning I had the satisfaction of finding the camp broken up and the coast cleared."

. . . To-day (26th), Capt. Dobbs and McAndrew came down to tea and the former beat me three games at chess. He is an old player and understands the rules, but I do not despair of beating him yet when I get a little more into practice.

The gentlemen being weather bound stayed all night, but as they chose to go to bed at the unchristianlike hour of nine o'clock I took the opportunity of writing my journal and finishing this letter, from nine to five being rather more than I like of a blanket on the floor. And now that I have finished my journal thus far, allow me to say that it is the last that I shall write, with such regularity. I originally commenced upon this system thinking that first impressions are best conveyed in that form, and that from a journal of my proceedings you would be better able to judge of our way of life than if I had attempted a more formal description of the state of society, etc. But now novelty is wearing off and there is nothing in nine days out of ten worthy of being recorded. Whenever any variety occurs I will faithfully relate the adventure, but where I am silent you must imagine to yourself my usual humdrum life. . . .

To his Father

Fenelon, Oct 28, 1834

It is so long since I wrote last, and that too after a considerable interval, that I fear you will think I am going to relax in my diligence as a correspondent; but when the hurry is once fairly over I have no doubt I shall become more regular again

Ever since July I have been in a continued bustle, with twenty things calling imperatively to be done and no time to be spared. When called down to Peterborough it has been in a hurry before I had time to write a letter, and when down there it is impossible to write.

To-morrow we are going down to Peterborough for the last time before winter, for the treble purpose—of attending a public meeting to petition for the opening of the Trent,—to get up our stores before our approaching state of torpidity comes on,—and to be present at a housewarming to be given by Major Hamilton;—and this opportunity of writing to you, as it may be the last for some time, I must not let slip.

I do not remember by the bye whether I ever mentioned the Major to you in any of my letters. He is a very gentlemanly old man who bought a mill at Peterborough last autumn and has lately been joined by an agreeable family of all sexes and ages, of whom the eldest son, about twenty, is going to be our neighbour next summer on Cameron's Lake, on his father's grant.*

Of my proceedings since I last wrote I have not much to say; when I went down to Peterborough and returned to my house with Mr. James, we were the bearers of the news that the Governor† was at last coming up to our Lakes. Having notified this to the different gentlemen on the road we went up to McAndrew's and he and I rowed down to Need's to bring the great man up, leaving McCall and Macredie to cook dinner. But no governor had arrived and we returned to console ourselves by eating his dinner. Next day James and I went on to Blythe* and I sent my men down for the seed wheat I had brought up. But the following day, when I was without my boat, we had the satisfaction of seeing His Excellency proceed up with a long train of boats, canoes, etc After a while McAndrew sent us a log canoe and we followed up to the Falls

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* Major Hamilton was of the 78th and 79th Highlanders. He served with Sir Ralph Abercrombie in Egypt, and in other campaigns. On retirement from service he received from the Imperial Government, a grant of 2,000 acres of land in Canada. He came to Peterborough in 1833 and purchased the grist mill and saw mill of Adam Scott on Scott's Plains by the Otanabee. To these he added a brewery and distillery and operated them with Mr. Fortye, a son-in-law. His family consisted of three sons and seven daughters.

† Sir John Colborne

The Governor was quite delighted with the place and promised to send us up plenty of settlers next year. This is not all humbug, Sir John being a plain straightforward sort of person, and to shew his zeal he next day walked about a dozen miles through the bush to see the Talbot river, which runs into Lake Simcoe, and immediately ordered a survey of the country between it and Balsam Canal From Sir John's character and his known exertions when he has taken a fancy to a particular township I anticipate the happiest results.

Yours of the 27th August contains much to answer—at least many queries though short ones. Pork may certainly be grown as good in Canada as in the States, and the farmers' pork is generally better; but not being yet so well a settled country we use more pork than we grow and Ohio pork can be procured cheaper; they have extensive backwoods there where the pigs run almost wild,—most of the heads in our pork contain a rifle ball. This winter I shall not use much pickled pork; I am going to kill my interesting animal and two of her progeny when the frost sets in.

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* The name he had given his house, "the true pronunciation of the other name—Fingooshing—being too like Pincushions."

My ice house is nearly finished, half below the surface, with a good drain, and half above; the walls being double, of logs with about a foot of earth between, the roof of cedar slabs thatched with hemlock boughs and covered with a rounded top of earth from one to three feet This with a roothouse of similar construction, a hen house, two pigstyes, a shed for cattle, one for firewood, and two shanties, form a little village round my mansion with its two wings.

If you wish my letters still to give you a sort of Journal I can do it, as I still keep a journal for my own edification and when anything out of the way happens I certainly will give it in that form, but I think, in general, a hebdomadal will answer your purpose as well as a journal.

Peterborough, Oct. [Nov.] 8th. We have had the Trent meeting of which I spoke and have got our petition well signed. It is to the effect that if our provincial funds cannot suffice, which is improbable, we wish *our* Parliament to apply to the Home government to open it; the increased value of Crown land and sale of mill sites will go a long way in repaying them. If they will not do it we petition them to sell at the present rate the Crown lands on the course of the waters to a Company to open the navigation. Since the meeting we have had letters from several parts of the country, promising to cooperate with us, if none of these plans succeed, in raising the necessary funds by imposing a local tax of so much an acre upon all lands in the Newcastle District. The thing is receiving so much general attention now that I think it must soon be done About £300,000 will be required, and I should think that the mill sites which would be created at the locks would sell for near £100,000. This would bring it up as far

as Peterborough. About £150,000 more might be wanted to extend the navigation to Lake Simcoe. . . .

The following is a statement which will give you a pretty correct notion of my financial situation. Of this account I must observe that I have brought down with me most of the data, but I find them now insufficient to give a full account. My miscellaneous expenses of this year I cannot yet make up; the greater part of them come under the head of provisions. It is to be observed also that the greater part of the expense of clearing has been paid in provisions and consequently about £60 must be deducted, if my account for provisions in this year had been made up.

I must also add £44 odd, a present loss by which I have gained experience; Mr. Wark of this place has failed and taken me in to that amount, but I believe I shall recover about £30.

The greater part of my heavy expenses are now over, except the remaining instalments on my land, and I have now something coming in. Besides my crops, which will now much relieve my expenditure for provisions which has been very heavy, I have been paid £25 in a bill on Jameson for Gordon's land, and he owes me £37 10s more to be paid in annual instalments of £12 10s; and my other land will soon be producing something

Statement

U. E. Rights (one unlocated)	£112.	4.	0
Land, within £1 or 2	" 90.	0.	0
Clearings	" 79.	6.	0
Oxen £58 8. and cows and pigs £13	" 71.	8.	0
Labour (including buildings)	" 79.	15.	0

N B Some later payments omitted

Miscellaneous expenses for 1833

Travelling, living, etc.	£44. 7. 3	
Carriage, including boats	" 21. 1. 11½	
Tools, etc.	" 10. 4. 9	
Furniture, including several miscellanies	" 31. 0. 8½	
Lumber for house, etc.	" 5. 2. 0	
Provisions, stores, etc.	" 45. 3 4	
Postages, etc., etc.	" 15. 3. 2	£172. 3. 2
		£604. 16. 2

To his Father

Peterborough, Feb. 18th, 1835

You express a desire that I should continue to write to you somewhat of a journal and this in my future letters I will endeavour to do; in this one however I cannot commence the practice as I intend to begin from the beginning of the year, and I have now no time for such a long letter even if I could recollect the order of events without referring to my journal. I can only say at present that we have had a very gay winter, several parties from Peterborough and the neighbourhood have been up to see the back lakes and observe how we backwoodsmen live, and we in return, besides coming down to the Bachelors' Ball, which took place on the 27th ulto., are now undergoing a round of dancing, etc., which has kept us from home for a week already and promises to detain us a day or two more. Balls in Canada are no joke; when one comes forty miles to dance one does not like to make such a journey for a trifle and one takes a spell of dancing sufficient for an average winter at home. We commence at seven or eight and, as the roads are hardly safe for the ladies to drive home by in the dark, we contrived, on the 27th at least, to keep them employed till daylight We had about forty dancing ladies present and when I came to reckon up in the morning I had danced with all but two and with some of them two and even three times. On the 13th inst., we had a grand ball at Major Shairp's which we kept up till half past five; last night at Col. Brown's we stayed till two, and to-night at Major Hamilton's we are going to keep it up as long as we can find any one to dance with. My share of the dancing will however not be so great as usual as I am engaged in the capacity of butler, etc. Besides these more formal parties we from the back lakes spend all our vacant evenings at Major Hamilton's where we generally of late have contrived to get up a dance. They are an extremely pleasant family with no nonsense or formality, but I have not yet been able to make up my mind with which of the three eldest daughters I am in love. Neither do I hear that McAndrew or Macredie have as yet made up their minds, though all the world of Peterborough are of the opinion that we are three couples elect In fact marrying and giving in marriage proceeds rapidly this year Last year we had but one bridal party but this autumn we had two of our ladies carried off, one of them the belle of the district; and this winter two of my pleasantest partners have made their appearance at our balls as brides . . .

I do not remember any particular news on the back lakes except that Jameson's saw mill is in full operation; that of Need however will cost a good deal more

before it is well supplied with water.* The latter gentleman I am glad to inform you has become a great favourite with us all lately. As a companion, occasionally spending a Sunday with us, he is very amusing and exceedingly good natured. Upon the whole there is now great harmony amongst us and I hope it may continue.

We made a census of Verulam the other day and find that there are thirty-three families, but in poor Fenelon the only settlers we yet muster are Jameson, Wallis, McAndrew, Macredie and myself, and to keep these in order the late Commission of the peace has named three magistrates, namely the three first. I have still great hopes that next year may bring us a great accession of emigrants, especially if Sir John Colborne remain in the Province, for he has been making all Canada jealous by his praises of our Lake and the fine set of young men who are settled there.

[A letter with narrative up to May 16 was lost in transit.]

To his Father

Blythe, June 16th, 28th, 1835

As events are now of somewhat rare occurrence I must premise that on such days as are not particularly mentioned my occupation during this time has been working in my garden planting potatoes and Indian corn, and shooting pigeons, which have come upon us this year in immense flocks and devoured great quantities of my pease and oats; as they do not however spread generally over the field, but commence at one end and work their way regularly to the other, they do not cause as much mischief as they otherwise would; where they have been there is not a vestige of vegetation and we can sow something else, but the rest of the field is uninjured. . . .

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* Need records in his diary that the saw mill began working on April 8, 1836

You ask about the nature of swamps. I think I must have explained before. Wherever there is a spring rising, cedars which love a moist situation rise up; these in time fall down, but, as the wood is almost indestructible, the fallen trees lie on the ground in every direction for centuries, and in time block up the course of the stream; this of course soon spreads further its moisture and the same operation is constantly repeated until at last the swamp which was originally only around the spring, may extend through the whole valley. A drain however may in general be made at a trifling expense when you have once found out the spring, and at one or two dollars per acre more than hardwood you may clear the land, when all trace of swamp will disappear. These observations apply principally to patches of swamp of five to ten or fifteen acres which you find scattered through the hardwood land, and of its origin I feel convinced I have given the proper solution. Again, excepting where there is a great fall, the banks of creeks are almost universally accompanied by swamp, for the same reasons, and by cutting out the logs which lie across the creek and otherwise adjusting the drainage, such land may be recovered at a trifling expense. But there are in some extensive valleys swamps of such dimensions that it would be an enormous expense to attempt recovering them; and as the land which they occupy belongs to perhaps twenty different individuals, it is almost hopeless to expect that for many years any concert can be established amongst them to concur in a system of drainage. Still no one can deny that the swamps are the richest and best lands we have, and the majority of them might be easily drained; but the clearing of a swamp always costs more than that of hardwood land, independent of the expense of draining, which among stumps is more difficult and expensive than such an operation would be at home, and people prefer hardwood land, from which they know they can get good crops for a year or two though ultimately I have no doubt the swamps will pay better. Dry swamps appear to be censed much in the same way as the others, only there being more natural fall, it is but here and there that the cedar intercepts the water though they cover half the ground; in these there is always some mixture of hardwood; such is the land into which I propose for the future to extend my clearing.

✓As for botany—I carry it and a little ornithology on at intervals and am beginning to be acquainted with most of the plants and birds one commonly meets with, but one is so much occupied with other things that these studies proceed slowly. One cannot carry one's books about with one and if I see a new plant on my way to Peterborough I must leave it, as there is no chance of getting it home in a fit state to be examined; and except when just round home one is always in such a hurry.

This letter having been some time on hand I must continue my journal, which I left at the 14th, from when until the 20th I remained quietly at home and I remember nothing much of importance. 23rd. From what we heard from Jameson it appeared that Major Hamilton and his lady expected us down to take them up to see our lakes; it afterwards appeared the note to that effect had miscarried. However I left home at four a.m. and pulled down to McAndrew's to breakfast, and he and I went on to Peterborough and arrived to tea. The Major was unwell and would not return with us, but at half past four the next morning they sent to wake us and say he was ready to start. 24th. We got up and after breakfast walked to Mud Lake with the young ladies, the old gentleman and his lady riding; we pulled up to McAndrew's before sun set. His house was given up to the strangers and we went to sleep at Macredie's. 25th Rowed home with Dennistoun* to breakfast and then put him up to the Falls and returned to McAndrew's to dinner and slept again at Macredie's. The Major who is in very delicate health was so fatigued he could not stir out all day. 26th. Home to breakfast; McAndrew and Tom Macredie pulled the Major and Mrs. Hamilton up to my house and thence to the Falls and to see some land of his on Cameron's Lake, and they returned to dinner with me. My dinner gave the last touch to my character as an Amphitryon. I have given more abundant dinners but never a more genteel or better cooked one. At the top fried bass, bottom haunch of venison, done to a turn and kept to an hour, with currant jelly sauce, one side a brace of roasted partridges with bread sauce and the other a curry—A curry! ! !—a bright effort of my own genius. A half dollar's worth of curry powder from Toronto has given six dishes for gala days; the material, what was it? a cheek of common pickled pork boiled in three waters till all the salt and rancidity was away and then stewed down until very tender, the gravy a little enriched with portable soup—and an excellent dish it makes. And where did I get the currant jelly, you will enquire? Wallis kept bachelor's house at Montreal for some time, and upon coming up here divided some remaining pots of preserves amongst us. This may serve as hint if you send me out any preserves another year. Home to McAndrew's that night. The 27th. Pulled them down to Peterborough and drank tea there. 28th, to-day. Went to church and dined at the Major's, and stole an hour whilst the rest were walking to finish this letter, the latter part of which has been written almost in the dark; to-morrow we go home.

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* Mr. Robert Dennistoun who had recently, at the age of about twenty years, taken up land on Cameron Lake. Later he studied law and became a Q.C. and the County Judge for the County of Peterborough. In 1839 he married one of Major Hamilton's daughters

To his Father

Fenelon, July 2nd, 1835

As to the shoes I confess I did not say whether they fitted me or not. A man may increase a foot or more round the waist without enlarging sensibly across the instep, and were he to fatten to the size of Dan. Lambert his feet would not grow seven-eighths of an inch longer. It certainly was a curious mistake of yours to suppose my shoes must be too small for me, especially as I said nothing about it, and to tell you the truth I did not imagine you ever did think so, but attributed your sending them to your known predilection to large shoes. They are however very wearable though, as might be expected, not quite so comfortable as those made to my measure, and I said nothing, knowing of old my small chance of persuading you that I knew the size of my feet better than you. But I cannot allow that it is my fault (not having told you how they fitted)

that you are now sending out a pair still larger. According to your principle—that if I do not cry out I am not much hurt—it might have been natural to send me more of the same size, but I do not know upon what system of logic you formed your reasoning that as I did not say these were too large they must necessarily be too small. Moss at the toes may do to correct an unavoidable evil, and loose shoes may do very well for a person who walks about the house or your smooth roads half slipshod, but on our rough roads and in our rougher woods I do not know a more fatiguing pest than a shoe too large. Excuse my warmth on the article of shoes,—it is intended to impress upon you that I do not want another pair larger still.

You have seen Mr McAndrew, and my mother I see forms an idea of his brother from "his mild and agreeable manners and thoughtful expression." McAndrew's father died early and his brother had to perform the office of father for him, and having heard a great deal of him I feel quite acquainted with him, though I should have expected anything but "mild agreeable manners"—at any rate such are not the manners of A. McAndrew; he has almost overpowering animal spirits, and shares with his brother a temper very easily roused to something like violence, which however soon goes over, and which we know him too well to care about; with strangers however and especially ladies A. McAndrew can smooth his countenance to as mild and agreeable an expression as e'er a Scotsman in Christendom.

Upon the subject of R. Birley it is a very difficult thing to advise. I feel inclined to think that a cleared farm is the most profitable situation though not so agreeable as the woods; but I think you overrate the difficulties and privations of the woods. You must remember that people coming up to our neighbourhood, for instance now, have not the tithe of the difficulties to encounter which McAndrew and I had who were the pioneers; and a person may go upon an uncleared farm if they prefer it without going so far as forty miles back from the nearest town. Even those who are only five or six miles from Peterborough call themselves backwoodsmen and Peterborough itself the great Metropolis is reckoned amongst semibarbarous regions by the dwellers in the front. I would not recommend any one except such as have been previously conversant with agriculture to take a cleared farm in full operation; but a farm with twenty or thirty acres in grass, and a sort of house or shanty upon it, may be bought within five or six miles of a market as cheap almost as wild land, and such a space cleared is an immense advantage as it enables a person at once to commence with cows and oxen. When I came out here first everybody here was mad from the sudden rise which land had taken all round Peterborough, and no price was so exorbitant that some purchaser was not to be found. Cleared farms consequently anywhere near Peterborough (which was the centre of this mania) bore an immoderately high price, or perhaps I might not have been a backwoods man. The cause of this was in part the sudden raising of the Government price of wild land, which enabled some speculators to get cent per cent in a month or two, and partly the real start that Peterborough had taken the two previous years, which sanguine men thought would continue for ever; and in a great measure also to Mr. Bethune (whom I must have mentioned), who was then the great man of this part of the world, and who now

has turned out to be a most sanguine but most reckless and unprincipled speculator. Last year came a reaction, but this year things I think are at about their fair value, though I think I do see some symptoms which a large emigration backed by the example of an influential speculator might ripen into another mania, against the efforts of which I would caution any new emigrant.

Besides the exorbitant price of cleared land when I came out, I was influenced in going into the backwoods partly by the sort of interest which attaches to the life of a pioneer, partly by the pleasant situation and prospect of agreeable society on our lakes, and partly by my opinion, which still remains unchanged, that, however it may be delayed, the time must come when these lakes will become very valuable. I shall yet see a town at Cameron's Falls taking the lead of Peterborough.

I was led away with the rest of the mania and thought that our time would come sooner than it has. Our township after being unknown for eight or ten years took a sudden start and I supposed would continue to improve. All last year however it remained stationary or nearly so; Jameson, whose interest it certainly was to promote settlement, was so busy with making love and wandering about the country after one speculation or another, that with the exception of building his mill he did nothing; he has 12,000 acres of land and has not brought up one settler. Now however we are going to get another start, which I hope will not be so rapid but more continuous—*nous verrons*.

6th. Having been so unfortunate as to miss the Rev.

Mr. Bettridge* I determined to lose no more time but to take advantage of an idle time, that might not occur again before harvest, and take John Menzies' three children down to be christened. Started at half past five and got down to Peterborough after dark. 7th. Stood godfather to all the three and sent them off in my boat home, remaining myself to go up with Dennistoun, having had quite enough of my passengers. On my road down I heard that Major Hamilton's mill had been burnt down on the 4th, and upon arriving found it was too true. The sawmill, gristmill, distillery and brewery had all been burnt down in three quarters of an hour; 1,000 bushels of grain, 3,000 gallons of whiskey, forty barrels of ale and several of flour had been consumed; nothing but one barrel of whiskey and the bolting cloth from the mill were saved. Nothing was insured. The Major, to whom from his delicate health I thought it would have been fatal, bears it astonishingly. He was ill of the ague at the time, which I am afraid he caught on our lakes, but the fire stopped it immediately. I should have been the more alarmed by such a shock to the constitution if it had not been for an attack of the gout which it revived. I sat with him by his bedside for some time yesterday and he talked most cheerfully of rebuilding everything immediately. In the evening he sent to desire I would come and drink tea with him and he took as much interest in all our proceedings and our hopes for the progress of the back lakes as if nothing had occurred to himself in the meantime.

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* Mr. Bettridge was a clergyman at Woodstock who had accompanied the son of Admiral Vansittart on a visit of inspection to Balsam Lake where Admiral Vansittart was proposing to make a large purchase.

[It is not intended that the extracts made from those letters should be biographical; but the diary of a month which follows is brief, and is suggestive of the social side of backwoods life.]

To his Father

Blythe, Aug. 12, 1835

My letter of the 8th July (concluded at least on that day) told you of my journey down and the bad news that awaited me there; the cause of my delay was partly my having sent my boat off on the 7th, and being consequently dependent upon others for my return, and partly that Mrs. H. pressed me so warmly to stay a little longer, alleging (which was manifestly true) that the Major was much the better for having somebody to talk to and keep his spirits up. What I did each day is hard to say. Immediately after breakfast I generally spent an hour by the Major's bedside, after which I as regularly found my way among the young ladies where two or three more hours used to pass away in conversation, my hands being kept employed in the ignoble occupation of unpicking, marking, darning, etc.; another visit to the Major concluded the morning. After an hour or two for dinner a chat or walk with the ladies occupied the afternoon; the Major generally appeared at tea, and after he had retired chat, music, etc., concluded the day. All very agreeable but exceedingly unprofitable, and you may perhaps say that the Major's daughters had as much to do with my stay as the Major himself—may be. However on the 15th, having been relieved from my post by McAndrew, I departed, and travelled up to

Bobcaygeon by a scow which now plies regularly twice a week, and thence on home next day.

The 19th, being Sunday, I killed a fatted calf (to wit a sucking pig) and proclaimed a feast, which was attended by Jameson, Dennistoun, Need, Tarbutt and William Hamilton, the two Macredies* having gone down to Peterborough. Need having brought up his dogs we had a hunt in the morning—of the 20th—but lost the deer; however he stayed all day with me, and the next morning and again in the evening we had another unsuccessful hunt. Finally however on the morning of the 22nd we killed the deer; Need and William Hamilton returned to Bobcaygeon, Jameson and Dennistoun to the Falls, and Tarbutt remained my guest. The rest of the week was occupied with underbrushing the flat by the creek side. The 26th, Sunday, a second feast was proclaimed and a second pig died. The guests were Need, Wm. Hamilton, Robt. Hamilton, McAndrew, the two Macredies, Dennistoun and Tarbutt. McAndrew, the Macredies and Dennistoun went home, the rest stayed and killed a deer before breakfast next morning. 28th. Need went home. This week all hands, guests and all, were underbrushing. The 31st. Two strangers arrived to dinner and stayed all night. Aug. 1st Tarbutt left me. 2nd, Sunday. The Macredies dined here and took R. Hamilton away. Wm. Hamilton and I underbrushed, chopped, and carpentered during the week. The 8th. News having arrived that the frame of Major Hamilton's new distillery was up, Wm. Hamilton's holyday was over and he left us. 9th. We all met at dinner at McAndrew's. 10th. I commenced reaping what promises to be a very good crop, but we are rather short of hands, as two of my men contrived to cut their feet whilst chopping last week, but they are both limping along with the rest to-day. I muster in all—John, James (cut himself), his wife and three children, but one of the girls is obliged to help a good deal at the cooking. As the wheat is ripening much faster in some parts of the field than others we have taken the earlier parts first and shall easily get through it I hope before it gets too ripe. The 10th, 11th, and this morning have been awful days, the thermometer above ninety degrees and not a breath of wind, but just at dinner time a thunder storm came on and it has settled into a wet afternoon. So much for my journal up to to-day.

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* A younger brother, Tom, had arrived early in June.

One thing occurs to me which I must say now. McAndrew tells me that he has written very despondently upon the subject of the country to his brother and his brother seems to have spoken to you upon the subject. I am surprised you did not allude to it. Canada is decidedly not the country we any of us thought it was, but I do not go by any means the length that McAndrew does. I still think and hope that a livelihood may be made here, but this I foresee—that Sturgeon Lake will be a very changed place in a few years. McCall is already lost,* Sawers may be considered gone, and Atthill is very doubtful. Jameson, if he had not gone so far already, I am sure would like to back out, and Need is a very doubtful and uncertain person. As for McAndrew and the Macredies, my more particular and intimate friends, I feel almost confident that this time next year their bones will be shut up. What they are going to do I do not know, nor do they probably themselves, but I see plainly they are not for this country. As to my opinions upon the capabilities of the country I refer you to a book on Canada and the States by Patrick Shirreff. He is a conceited Scotchman, and evidently has at starting a prejudice against Canada, but, making due allowance for that, his account seems to me the fairest and most practical of any I have seen; the account of Illinois however must be received I think with very great caution, and very heavy deductions must be made from his praises before you will reach the truth. Get the book and read it.

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* He returned to England and not long afterwards, died.

To his Father

Blythe, Oct. 10th, 1835

My last brought you up to the 12th, or I think in a postscript to the 16th of August and from thence to the end of the month not one day occurs to me either *alba* or *nigra creta notandus*, or to speak more classically *creta aut carbone notandus*. The 2nd September was a day we had been looking forward to, expecting to mark it in our calendars with the whitest of the former substance. Mrs Hamilton and her daughters had promised us a visit and McAndrew and Macredie had gone down on the first to row them up to Bobcaygeon, whilst Dennistoun and I went in a canoe to receive them there and relieve the others. The Major had quite recovered, the new mill and distillery were rapidly rising and he was in the highest spirits; but the news reached us at Bobcaygeon that he had had a paralytic stroke and was hardly expected to survive.

Dennistoun and I being so far on our road determined to proceed and arrived at Peterborough that evening. Finding the two Macs dining out we waited up till they returned and then sat up so long talking that at last it was voted useless to go to bed. About five they set off home, and Dennistoun and I having polished our backwoods integuments a little wrote some letters, made some calls, etc., and getting off from Peterborough about three p.m. reached McAndrew's before midnight only about an hour after the others, who had drawn up their boat and had a sleep on the road. After a good supper (part of the preparations for the ladies) and a pipe we slept as you may imagine not till morning. This is the last time I have been down, but from accounts the other day it appears that the Major, though a long time in a hopeless state, is again for the twentieth time recovering from the very verge of the grave.

Things on the farm did not go on so well as could be desired. The wheat was an excellent crop and the first days of harvest fine enough, but from the day I wrote to you until to-day there have not been I think two, but certainly not three fine days together. The consequence is that hardly a farmer in the country can show a sample of wheat entirely free from sprouted grains, and a great deal of the wheat and most of the oats are yet out in the field. I have been much more fortunate than many, though the harvest has been very expensive from the great loss of time in opening out and covering the stooks as a short gleam of sunshine or an impending shower called us away from the reaping. I still got the produce of fifteen and a half acres of wheat and six of oats saved before most of my neighbours, and though I can only rely on one stack as perfectly free from sprouted grain the rest makes very good bread, and with the exception of McAndrew's, which was almost all saved the first fine week, it is reported to be the best which has appeared yet at Purdy's mills.

The quantity as well as the quality surprised me also—twenty-five bushels per acre is often talked of, but all the old farmers say they have seldom seen more than eighteen; however mine, notwithstanding two or three bushels per acre loss by shedding, from the constant shifting about of the stooks, and nearly as much more which is growing so badly as to be fit only for the pigs, will yield nearly if not quite twenty-five bushels per acre fit to go to the mill; at least as far as I have yet threshed out. By to-morrow night too I shall have finished raising my potatoes on four and a half acres which will yield rather more than 1,000 bushels. An acre and half of Swedish and near two acres of white turnips with a small patch of mangel wurzel, of peas and of corn complete my crops of this year. The wheat and oats were sown in the spring with grass and clover, but this has so completely failed that I shall have to sow it almost all over again next spring and thus shall lose a great deal of time; in fact in about five acres of wheat stubble I think I shall not repeat the grass, but drag in oats in the spring. The land which was under potatoes and turnips I shall have in spring wheat and barley next year and I have about eight acres of wheat sown on new land this fall. I have also some eight acres or more chopped and burnt ready to log up in the spring for potatoes and turnips; but the rain in harvest time has stopped my burn on the small strip down to the lake and on the patch along the creek which I mentioned I was chopping in my last, and the latter at any rate cannot be burnt till the middle of next summer.

I tried both kinds of Cobbett's corn and both kinds have yielded cobs twice the size of the original ones, which looks as if they liked the country. The smaller

kind is certainly much earlier than the common corn but does not seem to yield so large a crop (I have not yet ascertained the quantity per acre), and at any rate the gathering and husking is twice as laborious as it would be in a larger sort. The larger I planted too late; it seemed to thrive better than the corn usually does, but has not fully ripened, and these last few nights my cattle have taken care that I shall not be able to estimate the crop per acre, but I should think it quite an average one. Next year I will try patches of six kinds, Cobbett's two, the common corn, the cinquantina, and two sorts that McAndrew has got from Portugal.

Here followeth a lamentation upon the climate of Canada. Last summer but one they say was an extraordinary summer; it was very hot and dry, so much so that the lakes and rivers were hardly navigable in parts and that potatoes and turnips produced very ill. Very hot it certainly was, but upon reference to my journal I find, that after a spell of fine weather that had long since melted the snow and coaxed on the vegetation, on the 14th of May there came a frost, the Lord only knows how many degrees below the freezing point, but such as to cause the icicles to hang a foot long from the roofs and the spray to form a cake of ice on the oars and paddles. The poor plants which were beginning to show their noses above ground in the gardens and fields! It appears also that on two or three mornings in the latter end of June there was ice of tolerable thickness at sunrise, which of course would prove satisfactory to corn, cucumbers, kidney beans and other tender vegetables. It appears too that on the night of Sunday the 28th September there came a frost that laid my potatoes as flat and turned them as black as if they had never been either green or upright. From the 14th May to the 28th September is four months and fifteen days to which this extraordinarily hot summer was limited, for the two frosts which bound this period were sufficient to kill any vegetable thing of moderate delicacy of constitution which might be above ground, not to mention the slight warnings of their fate which they received in June. By a further reference to the same authority I perceive, that being on our road down to Peterborough on the 30th October we were stopped by ice and on the 12th December the lake bore for the first time from McAndrew's, and even then it would not have borne a much heavier weight than mine, or indeed myself, if I had not been on snowshoes. Here then is a period of one month and thirteen days when we had neither ice nor water to travel on. Last winter they say was an extraordinarily cold one. Cold enough certainly; a great many potatoes were frosted in their pits and root houses through the country; my calf lost an ear and would have lost his nose if we had not taken him to live in the kitchen, and many mornings my cattle, having lain down during the night, were so stiff that we got them up with difficulty when the sun had been an hour or two up. In this helpless state it is said many cattle were eaten alive by the pigs. Well, but it was extraordinarily cold last winter; likewise I suppose it was extraordinarily long, at least the navigation was stopped on the 20th October and on the 25th April I had to break through the ice to get my boat launched when going down to Peterborough, giving a period of five months and twenty-six days of winter, and for upwards of a month the ice had ceased to be safe for anything but foot passengers. This spring there was no remarkable late frost but the weather long continued cold, and seeds sown in the latter part of May soon got the start of those sown earlier. It may be too much to attribute to the climate the caterpillars that destroyed my wheat and the pigeons which commenced upon my peas and oats and, as far as they went, cleared the ground so effectually you never would have guessed anything had been sown, more especially as they were said to be in unusual quantities this year. And I suppose I must be content with the same excuse for my grass and clover seeds having failed, for the fly having eaten three sowings of Swedish turnips and two of maugelwurzel, and notwithstanding repeated sowings having left me in the garden one solitary eatable radish and not a plant of any kind of cabbage; not to mention the nameless insect or whatever it is that ate off day by day as they appeared above ground the young plants of celery, lettuce, carrots and onions (N.B. onions from seed—from top onions I have a good crop—did you ever see top onions in England?) so that I have none of the two former and not above a handful of each of the latter. The next black day in my calendar is the 5th or 6th August when we had a frost, which though it did me little or no harm, killed many an acre of potatoes in low situations back in the bush. It is one great advantage that we have near the lake and in high and dry situations, that we feel no ill effects from frosts which destroy everything in back clearings when one would have thought the bush would give them shelter. I say nothing of our wet harvest because I believe that it at any rate is an almost unprecedented occurrence, and I must acknowledge that that inexorable fellow the frost has treated us on the Lake shore at least very leniently this fall. My kidney beans and tomatoes only yielded to his power the morning I began this letter. I wonder that I can have written this Philippic against the climate of Canada at a moment when for a week past (to-day is the 15th) I have been enjoying weather which if I looked only to my comfort I would wish to last all the year round. We are in the middle of the Indian summer, with slight frosts at night and the thermometer seldom above fifty-four or fifty-five in the day, but the sky is without a cloud and the lake unruffled by the slightest breath of air, so that you may hear the wild ducks splashing about at a mile off; a slight haze spread over the face of the country is perhaps all you would wish away. I don't know whether this Indian summer is as healthy as it is agreeable, at any rate I have somehow or other caught a cold which may perhaps have inspired me with a little extra acerbity, but I give you simple facts and

> "Facts are chiels that winna ding
> An downa be disputed."

Oct. 16. One more drawback to the climate I must mention and that is—ague. We used to think Sturgeon Lake almost exempt, and certainly it is better than Ops and some other places, but Need, Boyd* and both Mr. and Mrs. Frazer set the example this spring at the lower end, and after having sent down both Major Hamilton and one of his sons with an attack during the summer it has now fairly commenced amongst ourselves; McAndrew and both the Macredies have had slight attacks. I don't believe that care is of any avail in keeping off the ague, at least we have now been for two summers oftener wet than dry I believe and yet we felt no ill effects, whilst other cautious people—Need and Boyd for instance—took it. It must be acknowledged however that the night when McAndrew's symptoms first appeared he had been up to the knees in the lake and sat all evening and slept all night in the same clothes; and in consequence of this warning I have since been more cautious. The Macredies were always rather given to changing stockings, and Jameson's projected marriage had already wrought a wonderful change in him. When I first came up the lakes I carried a spare pair of socks, and they were alternately on my feet and drying in the sun, but I soon got tired of that. In fact in summer one cannot keep dry; if you walk in the bush you come occasionally upon a swamp, if you go in a canoe you have on shallow shores to step into the water to avoid hurting the bark; and our boats, what with the original imperfection of their structure, the cracks which the heat of the sun forms and the rough usage they get in drawing them up on stony shores, by concussions in rapids, etc., by which their seams are opened, are never so tight but that our feet get wet in them; not to mention the wading which we are not yet free from. However it does not much signify if the only ill effect is an occasional fit of ague, from which even otherwise we could not reckon upon being free.* You will plainly see from the whole tenor of this letter that Canada is, not in my opinion that Eldorado which most of the books you see at home would fain have it believed, but still I have not given the country up. The greatest difficulties are now over and I will give it a fair chance before I condemn it. The settlers who have come out within these last few years are falling off by degrees; but new ones are still coming, as confident and high in hopes as their predecessors were. I am told that numbers are deserting Lake Simcoe and other pet settlements. As for us, numbers have never come amongst us as yet, but we are losing some of our few. Dudley is off, to join Col. Evans in Spain I believe, the Macredies are still putting off their departure but they will not linger through next summer; Jameson, if it had not been for his projected marriage, would have been off too, and McAndrew you will see in little more than a month after you receive this. He having been sanguine had gone I think into the other extreme, but still intended trying the country one year more. The news however of his brother's failure in Liverpool has decided him and he will leave us almost immediately.† He will be a great loss to our society; however society will be a very secondary consideration with me next winter. I am going to keep no servant, and as I shall have twelve pigs and the cattle to look after I shall never be able to leave home. Perhaps Dennistoun and the Macredies may come to see me once a fortnight, but otherwise I shall be my own company.

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* Mr. Mossom Boyd of Bobcaygeon. He came out in 1834 at the age of 19 and settled on the north shore of Sturgeon Lake about half way between Bobcaygeon and Sturgeon Point. A person of great energy and industry, he was said to have chopped his clearing himself. He was the only one of the settlers who stayed on the lake, and he prospered in his tenacity. He bought Mr. Need's mill property in Bobcaygeon, and did a large lumbering business from that centre, until his death in 1883, the business continuing in the hands of his sons. In the beginning of his career as a lumberer he rafted square timber to Quebec to be shipped to Europe, after the manner then practised. John Langton was for some time partner with him in this business, and gives some account of it in these letters.

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* He knew more about ague when it came to its climax in 1846, when whole families lay helpless together, and somebody, who might be able, had to get in their harvests. In a note made many years afterwards, he said, "There were a great many deaths, principally the very old and the very young, and sometimes we had difficulty in finding men strong enough to carry the coffins up to the churchyard." It is noteworthy that a letter written in the ague year by another member of the Blythe family says, 'The mosquitoes have been a dreadful plague this summer. I never knew them so numerous."

† Mr. McAndrew returned to England to go into business in Liverpool, but in 1847 went to New York where he carried on a successful forwarding business, retiring to England in 1876.

I have run on at such a rate about climate, crops, etc., that I have no room left to answer your letters; I must however acknowledge receipt of the two packages, all the contents of which were very welcome, but the stock and waistcoat might have been dispensed with, as they are articles of attire which I never wear. I couldn't help smiling when I unpacked them, so strongly did they contrast with my usual dress, viz., white trousers or such as were white on Sunday morning, a red shirt open at the breast and tucked up above the elbows—*et voilà tout*—a coat never comes over my back except at Peterborough, or when I call on Mrs. Frazer. I do however carry a coat about with me—a blanket coat, the most comfortable and lasting wear I know, but it is seldom used except to sleep in at strange houses though very useful to kneel on in my canoe. This summer Robert Hamilton,* whose headquarters here were at McAndrew's, stayed a week with me, and the day before he went two strangers dined at my house. To do them honour I put on a coat to dinner and said very gravely to Robert, "Bob, put on your coat". Alas we found out after some hunting that the coat had never left McAndrew's—What a long story of coats!

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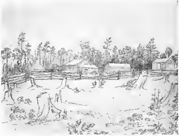
* The Hon. Robert Hamilton, second son of Major Hamilton He was at this time eleven years old, having been born in Ireland in 1824. He entered the service of the Hudson's Bay Company, in which he rose to be general inspector After the settlement following the Riel Rebellion, he became a member of the North West Council. He married the daughter of Robt S Miles, chief factor of the Hudson's Bay Company.

Peterborough, Oct. 22. McAndrew has sold his place and will be off in a fortnight to the regret of everybody. I never knew such an universal favourite. His successor is a Mr. Hackett, a West Indian with a family. He himself will take possession immediately and he expects his family to join him. He is a very *débonnaire* sort of a man about forty or forty-five; but however agreeable he may be he must suffer by a comparison with McAndrew.

Admiral Vansittart* bought 24,000 acres at the sale and he is bound to bring out thirty families next summer. Mr. Rebridge who is his managing man is to live on Balsam Lake this winter and go himself for the settlers next spring

*Admiral Vansittart, though his home was near Woodstock, had afterwards a house on Balsam Lake; a log house which is still in use, as part of a larger residence.

POLITICS, AN ELECTION, CHURCH BUILDING, ETC.



Blythe, the Original Settlement

A sketch by Anne Langton

The barn was built soon after his return (p. 174)
The tent was set up as a dining room for his friends, when he kept bachelor's house in the old quarters while the family lived in the new house (p. 184)

LETTERS OF 1836 AND 1837

[Since the date of the previous letter a visit had been paid to England; recorded by a letter describing the return voyage from Liverpool to Boston which took thirty days, from May 10th to June 9th, 1836.]

To his Father

Blythe, June 21st, 1836

You see from my date that I am once more at home; but before I tell you how I found things here I must first conduct myself so far.

I wrote to you on the voyage and concluded my letter as the pilot came on board. This was Thursday and the same evening I landed in Boston and having taken leave of my fellow passengers continued wandering about the city till bed time. In point of regularity and the beauty of its public buildings it is inferior to Philadelphia and in size and business of course it ranks below New York, but I prefer it much to either. It is the only American city I have seen where the dwellings of the rich stand together, unconnected with the stores and warehouses. Here there are many streets containing nothing but handsome houses and most of them in small gardens and the streets are lined with magnificent chestnuts, horse chestnuts, walnuts, elms and plane trees which often completely meet over the street. Besides these there is a very handsome and extensive park in the city with beautiful rows of trees much superior to the public walk at New York, and the public buildings are many of them very handsome.

[The journey from Boston to Oswego was by way of the Hudson River and Oswego Canal, as in 1833, but on this occasion railways came in as connecting links; one from Boston to Providence to take the boat by Long Island to New York, and a second from Albany to Schenectady where the canal trip began.]

At Oswego I met Mr. Stewart* of Peterborough and his daughters who told me all the news of Upper Canada, which is of considerable importance. The House of Assembly as you will have heard stopped the supplies† and the Governor has dissolved them Several of the old bureaucracy, thinking I suppose to be wiser than your Lords at home, have yielded to the Radical party and deserted Sir Francis‡ in his struggle with the House of Assembly, and their places in the Executive Council have been filled up by better men. I take it they rather repent their false move I think likewise the Radicals perceive their mistake by this time; they have touched the people in their pockets, the ill effects of their measures have been felt in every man's private concerns and it will take a great deal of their oratory upon the speculative question—whether the Executive Council is to be responsible to the people of Canada or the Colonial office—to make men forget the tangible evils produced by the stopping the supplies. The effect of this measure has been, besides the inconvenience which must necessarily result everywhere from such a step, that the money, which had been granted for roads, canals, etc, all over the country, cannot be expended. Now the cry in Canada has always been—open us the navigation of this river or grant us money to make that road; and now, when more money had been granted than usual for such purposes and every body was cock-a-hoop, the disappointment is proportionately great when these sanguine expectations are suddenly crushed. Besides, there is hardly a farmer anywhere who had not proposed to himself to get good wages this summer at some of these works, or to find a demand for his pork or flour in consequence, or to reap some private benefit himself besides the general improvement resulting to the country. And it unfortunately happens that, just at the time these works here are stopped, our neighbours in the United States have been dividing amongst the several states large sums of the public money for erecting fortifications and for other public works, and great numbers of the Canadians, in want of work at home, have gone across the lakes. The consequence has been that addresses have poured in to the Governor from every quarter calling upon him to dissolve the House, and in my opinion now that the call has been obeyed not half of the Radicals will be returned again. It appears to me to be an important crisis; and though the country may not go entirely to the dogs if the Radical party get into power again (which is the general opinion) at any rate it will have the effect I know of deterring many people from investing capital here and even induce others who have embarked to draw out—if they can. The governor appears to be a very clever and most determined man, but I must say I don't like the style of his answers to the addresses; they may be suited to the majority of those he addresses, but there is a great want of dignity in them; he talks too much of himself and condescends too much in attacking the Radicals, whilst the style is almost colloquial, and many of them look almost like electioneering addresses. However they take wonderfully with the *profanum vulgus*. In one of these performances he certainly shews up the Radicals famously; it appears that under the name of Commissioners for public works, for school lands and for one thing and another these chaps have been voting away to each other sundry large sums, and Sir Francis has published a list of them, in which appear Peter Perry (the Radical leader), for seven commissionerships £1,500 a year, Bidwell (the speaker of the house and late leader), £400, and many others, Peter Perry has canvassed three places but has no chance whatever. Mackenzie, who was the O'Connell of Canada, the great author of the Grievance Report, has voted against many of his own grievances because the Governor was ready to redress them, and, though he will come in, he will be comparatively innocuous, the very Radicals are ashamed of him.

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* Hon Thos Alexander Stewart. (See Note p. 7).

† An error, corrected on p. 171.

‡ Sir Francis Bond Head, who succeeded Sir John Colborne

Upon the whole, I rather like the appearance of things; the Radicals have gone a step too far and I hope we shall hear little more of them for some years to come. But one Act they have passed which, though praised by everybody I have spoken with, will, if well considered, do great injury I think to the country. With a view to prevent the exportation of specie to the States—and the banks there have lately been running upon banks here considerably—our legislative wisdom has ordained that an English shilling which used to pass for 1s 2d shall henceforth be a legal tender at 1s 3d and a sovereign which used to vary with the exchange from 23s 6d to 24s shall be of the value of 24s 4d. Now it appears to me that this difference is

so great that it would be worth while for the merchant in Lower Canada and the States to import English silver and force it upon us in payment for our grain, etc. at 1/3 p. shilling, whereas when we come to buy them they will only take it at its intrinsic value which is scarcely 1/2¼ at the usual rate of exchange, whereby upon every such double transaction Upper Canada will be a loser of about six or seven per cent. What effect will it have on the exchange? Many people instead of drawing upon England will import specie no doubt and the exchange will rise *pro tanto*, but what effect it will have on the exchange between here and Montreal or the States I can't make out. One thing however is certain, that the passing of this Act put £15,000 into the pockets of the Bank of Upper Canada, and it is a curious coincidence that full one half of the House of Assembly and nineteen-twentieths of the Legislative Council are deeply interested in the said Bank. But though they made such a profit upon the specie in their vaults, it may not be so much to their advantage after all, for besides the loss they must sustain in their interchange of notes with the States banks, the amount of British silver which will flow into the country will very much diminish their issues of notes I should think.

Whilst upon the subject of banks I may as well observe that the Land Bank which I told you of has totally failed, but some gentlemen about Peterborough have taken it up with some modifications and are about starting it again. I have no confidence either in them or their system and would not take their notes to any amount. Our Farmers Bank however is in a flourishing condition I understand and a branch of the Com-

mercial Bank is about to be established at Peterborough.

This has been a very long digression, I must now return to my journey but you must expect another touch at politics in my next after the election.

I left you last at Cobourg on Thursday morning. After breakfast I joined Mr. Stewart in a waggon up to Peterborough, raining tremendously all the day Blythe at last came in sight, all right and where it used to be, and we found Dennistoun and Gawin and Bob Hamilton with Tom[*] on their road from the mill. John Menzies was almost out of his senses for joy, for he was much alarmed with the responsibility that would rest with him if I had not come out before Tom left; and my letter to Tom not having arrived they were in the dark respecting me. John paid me the compliment to say that "By gosh and by golly he was as glad as if I had been his father." In excuse for his vagaries I must say that the previous day being the 18th[†] (this unexpected date shews me my letter ought to be dated the 22nd) John had gone to visit Wallis, and upon stating that there was no whiskey at Blythe and that by an article in his agreement with me he was secured the right of getting drunk on that day, the necessary article was supplied and the effects might not have worn off. However all were glad to see me and not the least old Neptune who sat looking at me and brushing the floor with his tail by the hour.

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[*] Tom Macredie, the younger brother. The elder Macredie had accompanied the writer to England and did not come out again. He and his brother, after other adventures, finally settled in Australia. About 1870 there came to Ottawa from Australia a long letter from W. A. Macredie who, having seen in a newspaper a notice concerning public accounts of Canada which was signed John Langton, wrote an account of his doings since 1836

[†] The anniversary of Waterloo.

John was dispatched to the Falls for Wallis and Mr. McLaren and we spent a pleasant evening.

Monday, after all were gone Tom and I went over the farm and found everything most satisfactory excepting the destruction of some hundred bushels of potatoes by the frost and a field of four acres of wheat so destroyed by the surface water ponding down in the spring that it was resown with barley.

Tom has been most industrious and economical, rather too much of the latter if all stories are true—of his living on bread and milk for a week and going to dine with Wallis on a Sunday to repair the waste of the system. At any rate when I arrived there was nothing in the house but flour, potatoes and milk, and a chance haunch of venison. Tom has kept most accurate accounts upon a system of his own invention which amused me so much I will give you a specimen. Thus, some items from May:

Whom	*When*	*Things given away*	*Things rec'd.*
The cow ..	2nd..	.. ..	a heifer.
John	3rd	....	a day's work.
Alexander .	5th	4½ lbs. salt	....
Little sow .	7th	... .	.6 little pigs
Weather ..	8th..	... .	the first shower of rain.
Boyd	20th.	The black ox (lent)	....
Myself	22nd	.. ..	.the tooth of a rake in my foot — most horribly sore.

Tom was a good deal cast down when first he got his recall,[*] but he is getting reconciled now though he still says whenever he is his own master he will return. About a month ago he got the ague and took so little care of himself that Wallis took him up to the Falls and put John Menzies in possession of Blythe. The ague is bad this year, but he and Mrs. Frazer are the only persons who have had it on the lake yet. The gentlemen at the lower end want to join us in the parson but want a church of their own and propose spending some of their money on it;* if he does go occasionally there to do duty it must only be in proportion to their share of the funds. Wallis and Dennistoun have got about £150 and expect a little more; Jameson has got no answer, if he has written which from his dilatoriness is doubtful. He has never brought his wife up and I think will go home. Capt. Dobbs is coming out again. I think I must have mentioned the expected settlement of Capt. Purdon and his family; they are now up and their house nearly ready. His friend Capt. Davidson is also to be a settler. There is a report of the admiral's settlement being given up, but they are still going on. Wallis takes admirably to the country, is very industrious and has made astonishing improvements at the Falls. The rye grass and trefoil are working very well.

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[*] Brought by the writer from the elder Macredie, then in England.

I go down to the election to-morrow but probably shall not go to Toronto for three weeks—they are too busy at the Government offices to attend to me.

To his Father

Toronto, July 13, 1836

In my last letter concluded at Peterborough I brought my motions down to the time when I was

starting for the election* Tom Macredie was left at my house in charge, though with the exception of weeding potatoes there was nothing to take charge of, and Wallis, Dennistoun, Gawin Hamilton and I went down in Wallis's new gig.

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* Need describes the opening of a church in "our settlement," which should mean Rokeby and Bobcaygeon, on March 9, 1836

Before I get you any farther on the road I must introduce you to the Calypso, who will cut a prominent figure in the events of the ensuing week.

The Calypso, (for you must know that the whole naval armament belonging to Fenelon Falls whether canoes, scows, skiffs or boats are all named after some of the characters of the Archbishop of Cambray's epic), the Calypso I say is a two-oared gig brought out by Wallis from Glasgow, and, though being built solely for speed she is much too slight to carry a load or be of general use in such a rough country as ours, she is extremely convenient to go down to Peterborough in and she will serve as a model by which our boat builders may improve.

As the Calypso was destined to carry the honoured weight of our candidate McDonell it became necessary after she had carried us to Mud Lake that we should carry her to Peterborough;† and as the road had been newly ploughed (a manner of equalizing the ruts and holes which is called turnpikeing in this primitive country), and there had been heavy rains for a week before, I can assure you we had no sinecure. We picked up three volunteers by the way and they occasionally gave us a spell, but nevertheless we were unanimously agreed that though very light on her own element the Calypso is confoundedly heavy on a ploughed road, a truth to which two black patches on my shoulders testify to this day. The old steamer on the Otonabee which had been sunk last fall below Peterborough, having been raised and refitted to carry down our voters, was now ready and was starting the next morning for the Rice Lake to tow up two large scows to serve in the same cause; but unfortunately as the steamer, like everything else here, was in debt and the creditor was a leading Radical below, a report was spread that she was to be seized at the Rice Lake and Wallis was requested to take down his crew in her for the double purpose of throwing the bailiff into the lake if he ventured on board and of keeping an eye on the Captain who was too well known as a Radical to be trusted so far alone. We four accordingly with T. Fortune, a younger brother of J. B. F.,* and Wallis's servant went down in her well armed with shilelaghs, and after a tedious navigation of a day and a night returned without even the satisfaction of meeting a bailiff to duck.

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*The Sully election. The candidates were Henry Ruttan, Alexander McDonell, George M. Boswell, and Dr. John Gilchrist. The last was in sympathy with Mackenzie. McDonell was elected.

†Usually called six or six and one-half miles.

On Monday morning at five o'clock we started with the steamer full of voters and the Calypso in tow until we came within six or seven miles of Sully on the Rice Lake where the election was held, when we took McDonell with Messrs. Shaw and Kirkpatrick† on board, and Dennistoun and I pulled them on to Sully, beating the steamer by half a mile—or rather keeping our distance for we got nearly as much start of her. We stayed on the ground till all the speeches were over and

then rowed off to Spoke Island about a mile and a half from Sully in the middle of the lake, which we had fixed upon for our encampment and which for the future, in honour of the cause, has been named Constitution Island.

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* J. B. Fortune, who married one of the daughters of Major Hamilton.

†Mr Stafford Frederick Kirkpatrick, a barrister, later Q C., who at this time, at the age of 25, was settled in Peterborough He afterwards went to Kingston to join his brother Thomas, the father of Sir George Airey Kirkpatrick, Lieut -Governor of Ontario from 1892 to 1897

"We had brought down with us a large marquée which had served as a hospital tent during the emigration of '25 and '26,* and as a raft touched at the island in the afternoon we impressed sundry boards which made us a long table and benches. The island is about twenty or thirty acres in size and beautifully situated to command a view of the other islands and the whole extent of the lake, and, being covered with natural grasses and only a few oak trees and shrubs scattered about it, it made an excellent situation for an encampment. Our party consisted besides ourselves of Shaw and Kirkpatrick,—Wallis's man attended as cook, etc. We each brought from Peterborough lots of cold prog; this with venison and fish which we got from the Indians afforded us good living and we always had half a dozen guests, either of our friends at Peterborough or of the gentlemen who came up to vote from other parts of the county, besides our candidate who usually spent the evening with us, and we often had very good speechifying. We spent a very pleasant week altogether, and if our presence was not very useful to the cause (Wallis being the only voter) we certainly added much to the animation of the scene. The beautiful little Calypso with her flags flying and her crew all dressed alike in striped guernsey frocks, white trowsers and low straw hats with blue ribbands, and each a British ensign as a scarf, rowing to and from the island and taking out the candidates every morning to address the electors as they came in in the steamboat, was a sight that Rice Lake had never seen before—I guess.

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* The emigration of Irish settlers to Peterborough under Peter Robinson, who was afterwards made Commissioner of Crown Lands.

All this is very ridiculous on paper, but in the midst of an election it is another thing.

On the Friday we pulled to the head of the lake which is about four miles from the polling booth for the County of Durham where I gave my vote, but for this solitary vote which was not wanted we lost all the fun at Sully, the Radicals having given in during our absence, McDonell and Ruttan being 176 ahead and 65 voters in possession of the polling booth. Upon hearing the news we hurried back and by our haste lost the fun at Durham likewise, the Radicals there giving in half an hour after.

The next day we packed up our duds and returned up the Otonabee in tow of the steamer, but something having gone wrong she had to stop so often that at last about ten o'clock we left her and pulled up the rest of the way to Peterborough again about half an hour too late for the bonfires and illuminations with which that ancient city celebrated our victory.

There was astonishingly little fighting considering the number of wild Irishmen we brought down, but they were altogether too strong for the Yankees, who after giving their votes generally mounted their horses and made off; so for want of better game our Patlanders occasionally got up a snug fight amongst themselves, but though there were three or four *kilt* I did not hear of any very serious damage.

The Constitutionalists throughout the country have gained a glorious victory. Mackenzie is turned out which we had hardly expected; Perry having no chance on his own interest was taken up by Bidwell, who hitherto has always been able to bring in with himself a member for Lennox and Addington, but the loyal party turned them both out, and there is now only one Radical of influence in the House. The House consists of sixty-three members and of the majority who threw out the supplies only thirteen have been reelected and only seventeen Radicals in all. I should be almost afraid that the Tories will be too strong and get back to some of their old tricks now that like the bull in the china shop they have it all their own way; but the people will watch them closely, and I have great confidence in the determination of Sir Francis Head to redress all grievances, which I don't think now are many. I have sent you by Tom Macredie a copy of the report of the Committee upon the subject of the Executive Council, the subject on which he split with the House, and as they touch upon most of their favourite topics in it, it will put you somewhat *au fait* as to our politics. But remember that it is only a party report and do not make up your mind till you have heard—*alteram partem.*

In my last I spoke of the money bills, as if the House had refused to appropriate money for them;* before I closed my letter I perceived my mistake but forgot to correct myself. The money bills passed both Houses, but Sir Francis suspended his assent upon the supplies being stopped, and thus the Radicals have tried to throw the blame of the Act upon him; but he made known to the House that if the supplies were refused he would withhold the royal assent from all the other bills; and thus they acted with their eyes open. With whom the fault lies signifies not much, for the thing itself is not of much consequence except a temporary inconvenience, though I have no doubt it had an astonishing effect upon the elections.

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* See p. 160.

After spending Sunday in Peterborough we returned up the lakes getting some extra men to help in carrying out the Calypso. Having seen everything going right at home and contracted for building a barn and logging up about ten to fifteen acres I took advantage of the only spare time there will be until winter, to go down with Wallis to Kingston where we each of us purchased a boat at the sale of the naval stores. His is a large jolly boat pierced for eight oars but principally intended for sailing, quite new, which must have cost at least £30, knocked down at £9 5/-, and mine a four-oared man of war's gig which would cost originally as much—price £8 10/-.

From Kingston I took the steamer to this place and wrote my letter up to the last page, after which I sallied out to pay my instalments at the Government offices, but on my road I learned that Sir Francis had made a general clearance, and amongst the rest Peter Robinson, the Commissioner of Crown Lands,* had that morning been displaced.

As it was useless of course to introduce my business to a man who had only been a few hours in office, I took the opportunity of going across to Niagara where I spent three or four days with Sawbridge.†

This morning I have called on Sir Francis Head who is a very agreeable little man but in one respect inferior to his predecessor, Sir John—he never asked me to dinner.

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* See note p. 169

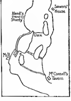
† An English acquaintance

I have at last put my U. E. rights into a fair train which have given me a good deal of annoyance, but I am afraid I may yet have a journey down to Kingston after harvest to get one of the transfer deeds. I shall have to wait here two or three days more for McDonell without whom I cannot get my other deeds out.

To his Father

Blythe, Sept. 22, 1836

As I might have very well foreseen, McDonell, for whom I was waiting in Toronto, never arrived, and consequently I left with only half my business finished and arrived in Peterborough the next day. The next day was spent in that delightful pastime, which I had thought I was no more to indulge in, namely wading up the rapids, but I have partaken of that amusement this year to my heart's content.



The apology for a lock, which the stupidity (if in some cases it be not worse) of the Commissioners has imposed upon us, certainly facilitates the progress of small boats, at least in some states of the water, but for scows it is decidedly worse than it used to be.

Formerly we used to unload at McConnell's drag the scow up the shoot, load again, and by dint of rowing, poling, warping, wading and lifting her over occasional obstacles with handspikes we got her up somehow. But now the main channel is dammed and the side channel, though up to the neck in most parts, has a bar at the top which a loaded scow will not pass; we have therefore to take the scow first in the lock and there unload her, then take her back to McConnell's, and, getting her first over the shoot, wade up to Sawers's house and then drop down again to the lock to load. Boats that can be lifted bodily out of the water we lift out at the lock and carry them over to the canal, but large boats must come up at (a) where it is very deep and a tremendous stream running and where I have generally had the satisfaction of going over head. Indeed wading is hardly the proper name for our operations, for a short man like me generally contrives to get up to the neck if not over head at once. Upon the present occasion we were nearly all day and it was very cold weather but we managed to get all our three crafts over the rapids, and then leaving the men to get on as best they could, we, the aristocracy, pushed on to the Falls in the Calypso.

I was nearly four days at home, or rather on the road between the Falls and Blythe, getting down lumber for my new barn, and on the fourth the barn was raised, there being in all twenty-nine of us, a large party for my small accommodations. How they slept I do not know; I never went to bed at all, for Mr. Kirkpatrick was to give a grand party the following day to which the rest of them were gone down, and Dennistoun and Gawin, with two of Wallis's men who were to officiate as flute players, came down to Blythe in the evening in the Télémaque. We supped and sat up till we calculated we should have daylight for the rapids and then started on our journey; and though we were two good hours in the rapids, where we had once almost determined to leave the Télémaque to take her chance and find our way home as we could, we got to McConnell's before anybody was up. The morning being very cold we indulged ourselves, whilst the breakfast was preparing, in drying our clothes, sitting in our shirts till our trousers were dry, and then putting on these, whilst the former was before the fire, the wanting garment being replaced for the time by a blanket. I mention this more particularly as it is a method I have only lately discovered of drying myself when in a mixed company; and I am beginning to be more particular about wet clothes, lately, if opportunity offers of drying them, on account of sundry rheumatic pains which generally succeed a bout at Bobcaygeon.

Starting after breakfast we reached Peterborough at eleven and consequently had plenty of time to refresh ourselves after our fatigues, call upon our friends, etc., until it was time to go to the ball which went off very well. The house being but small was reserved entirely for receiving rooms, card room and supper room, and a tastily arranged covered walk led through the garden to our old marquee, which, having been our house on Constitution Island, now served as a ball room, gaily ornamented with boughs and garlands of flowers, and the grass was our floor. A very pleasant evening it proved and it lasted till four o'clock. Of course I was amongst the last to leave and the sun was up before I was in bed. Nevertheless I was up again before eight and all morning occupied in getting the Alice* up and safely lashed on to the wheels of a waggon, which were separated to the necessary length by a temporary pole. This was a very tedious job, and before she was well off it was afternoon. I saw her part of the way to Mud Lake and then left her to go on with Need, Atthill and the flute players and I returned myself to take an oar in the Télémaque next morning, when we were to conduct a party of ladies up to the Falls. I spent a very pleasant evening at the Hamiltons and about eleven was preparing for bed, expecting not to start till late next morning, when I found it was decided we should push on all the way to the Falls and consequently were to start at five a.m. I had nothing prepared and it was near one before I was in bed, but next morning I was stirring soon after four, collecting our party. We breakfasted at Mud Lake, and about eight o'clock the expedition sailed. The Télémaque, with myself, Dennistoun, Gawin Hamilton and Tom Fortune as the crew, carried Dr. and Mrs. Barclay and Miss Fisher, the latter two sisters of Mrs. Kirkpatrick, and Mr. and Miss Stewart; the Calypso rowed by Wallis, Griffin and two Messrs. Kirkpatrick and a Mr. Foster. We got over the rapids without much difficulty and soon after dark reached the Falls. You may imagine I slept pretty well having had only about six hours sleep during the preceding three days and working pretty hard all the time.

The next day after prayers at home, I called on the ladies, dined at Dennistoun's, and home that night. Monday, came up to breakfast at the Falls in order to take the ladies up to Balsam Lake but the weather was

* The boat bought at Kingston p 172

so bad we could not get so far, but to make amends we had the flute players in after dinner and had a dance, the first thing of the kind, since creation, in these parts. I went home at night but returned before daylight for a hunt in which I was to have the honour of taking Miss Fisher* in my canoe. Our hunt was unsuccessful, but after losing the deer we all continued up to Balsam Lake, Miss Fisher being under the guidance of myself and Griffin and in celebration of such an honour my canoe by special permission was christened the Janet Fisher. This young lady you must know occupies so conspicuous a place here, not only because she is the first who has ever been so far back, but also because she is in herself a remarkably agreeable person and the best suited to the backwoods of any young lady I have seen in Canada. She is however too high game for such as me, I am afraid, having a very nice fortune of her own. Another pleasant evening succeeded and the next morning the party returned into the world again.

Only one event occurred in August, viz., the death of the old Major. Gawin had already commenced to settle on his father's grant on Cameron Lake and Mrs. Hamilton has determined to leave Peterborough and come to live with him.

Next in order of events is the receipt of your letter announcing the proposed grant of the Society to our church, which was of course a matter of rejoicing to us. With regard to this subject things do not proceed as smoothly as I had hoped. I wrote immediately upon the receipt of yours to the Bishop of Quebec and

to the Archdeacon of York,* neither of whom has honoured me with an answer. I wrote also to Lord Mt. Cashel, who is a proprietor in Fenelon, but [doubt] whether we shall get anything from his lordship. Secondly the Verulam gentlemen will not join us, so that the whole brunt of the thing will fall on Dennistoun, Wallis and myself, for I have no confidence whatever in Jameson doing anything; Capt. Dobbs, who is at last arrived amongst us, may perhaps do something. We are also applying amongst our friends in Toronto, but I fear we cannot reckon upon much from them. Thirdly, Wallis had forgotten what was distinctly understood at the time though unfortunately only in conversation, viz., that all we could collect should go to provide a permanent salary, and he wanted to apply some of it towards the building and clearing. I have had a hard battle upon this subject and at last it is thus settled. No money whatever is to be laid out on the church, all the expenses of that must fall upon Jameson and Wallis in whose village it is; no money whatever is to be laid out on the clearing, and Jameson and Wallis are to provide all the lumber for the house, and whatever work we cannot do ourselves, and which must be paid for, is to come out of the fund—this however will not reach £20 at the very most; but I fear we shall have hard work to get more than fifteen acres cleared. But the greatest difficulty is to get the land; I am afraid there will be difficulty in getting a grant of land from Government; last year it might have been done, but what resolution the present parliament may come to on the subject of Clergy Reserves I don't know; we shall petition and I hope we shall get our grant, but if we do not there will be a considerable difficulty. Jameson and Wallis ought to give the land, as they own full 12,000 acres, being more than a tenth of the two townships, but Jameson is a very impracticable man and Wallis does not like to promise; I have however a promise from Wallis, that if the land we can procure is not convenient to the Falls he will give a town lot (half an acre) upon which we will build the house, and if we get no grant, he will give two lots I will give one hundred acres if we cannot get a grant and I think I can promise in that case that by exchange or otherwise we can get two hundred acres at a tolerable distance, say a mile and a half or two miles off for a farm. As to the subscriptions we have very little information here upon the subject. Dennistoun and Wallis wrote under the impression that the money was to go to finishing the church, etc, and somewhere about £150 was collected, not including an offer of £50 from Mrs Dennistoun which was declined as being too much Now that the object of the subscription is finally decided and the proposal of the Society known, they have written again with a copy of the Society's letter and all subscriptions are to be paid to Messrs. B. Heywood & Co.,* as collected. You will therefore know the result as soon as we do.

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* Daughter of Judge Fisher of Lennox Co. and sister of Mrs. Stafford Kirkpatrick. She married Mr. Wallis in 1840.

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* The bishop of Quebec continued to be so called after the original Province of Quebec was divided into the Provinces of Upper and Lower Canada, in 1791. His diocese still extended over both Provinces. He had two archdeacons in Upper Canada, the archdeacons of York and Kingston. It is the former, the Ven John Strachan, who was concerned—and apparently unconcerned—in the matter of the Church for Fenelon.

Tell McAndrew, if I have no time to write to him to-day, that Need has set up a store at Bobcaygeon and serves things out himself from behind the counter

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* The private bank of Sir Benjamin Heywood, of which William Langton was manager

—this after all the aristocratic notions will amuse McAndrew.*

To his Father

Peterborough, Jany. 8, 1837

Almost my last sentence was that Dennistoun amongst others was certain of remaining amongst us. Now it appears that on that very day Dennistoun had determined to leave us. I must acknowledge that the last Scotchman leaving us looked rather ominous and shook my reviving confidence in the country; but I am happy to inform you that such an evil omen is not likely to take place. After some weeks hesitation and consultation with his brother in New York he has finally determined to remain where he is and is very actively preparing for extended operations. But besides this determination which is very agreeable to us individually I think the whole prospects of the country are materially improved. Notwithstanding all the abuse which the Spectator lavishes upon Sir Francis Head and the Tories, our Tory Parliament is doing its duty by the country and seems determined to press forward what is principally wanted—great public works. Without roads, canals and other similar improvements it is impossible the country can ever thrive, and this fact might have been taught them by our neighbours over the water. At last we have got a Parliament that seems inclined to do us justice in this respect, and if the Legislative Council does not follow the example of the Lords at home the country next summer will be all alive with important public improvements There is some consolation for us even if they do put an extinguisher on the bills of the lower house, in the certainty that in this country, where the abuse is not hallowed by antiquity, there will be very little trouble in getting rid of the nuisance. To the grant of £16,000 of last year, which was reserved, the royal assent is passed, and next summer the works at Bobcaygeon, Purdy's, and Peterborough will commence. £50,000 has been granted by the lower house for the Trent but has not yet passed the upper, and £500,000 for roads is in progress if it has not already passed the lower house. This however, which was principally intended to form one grand road through the Province from end to end, is not expected to pass and might perhaps embarrass our finances too much; but it is expected that, instead of it, £75,000 will be granted to be divided amongst the districts for the making and improving of inner roads. Amongst numerous public and private bills which are in progress those that affect us most are for the improvement of Windsor harbour and one for a macadamized road from thence to Scugog Lake. If these are passed we shall be almost independent of the Trent when the locks at Purdy's are complete.

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* In *Six Years in the Bush* Mr. Need says, "In consequence of so large an influx of settlers in the Autumn, I had thought it prudent to lay in a considerable store of flour and pork, which proved extremely beneficial to my neighbours and returned me a considerable profit. In this country, a gentleman may, if he choose, keep an open shop or store without derogation, and it is no uncommon thing to see a man of education and acquirement standing behind a counter."

But though all this is very satisfactory it does not afford me so much gratification as another fact, which, though not so obvious, is becoming daily more evident The farmers, who for years have been entangled in the meshes of the storekeepers, are clearly getting out of their books and becoming independent, and the extraordinary price of all produce this year will I hope complete their emancipation This looks well and will be a permanent advantage to the country and even to the storekeepers in the end.

I must now speak of the church I wrote to the Bishop of Quebec and the Archdeacon of York upon the subject and requested them to allow themselves to be named trustees. The former being in England the Bishop of Montreal answered me in a very cool strain, and the latter is too much engaged in politics* to think of such trifles and consequently left me without reply. At last I got a second letter from the Bishop, not much more satisfactory and evidently misunderstanding or forgetting what I had formerly said. Upon this I applied to our parson here, Mr. D'Olier (at Peterborough), and making him one of the trustees have left him to correspond with the Bishop. In the meantime it is useless to leave the money doing nothing in England especially as the Scotch subscriptions have been remitted to New York, and you may tell William that in the course of a week or two we shall draw upon Heywoods for £150.

My own operations may be very succinctly given. The lakes closed almost immediately after my last, but opened again for a day or two and were long impassable. During this time I was principally engaged working on the roads until the middle of December. On Christmas Day all the neighbourhood dined with me, then with Gawin Hamilton; Tuesday with Wallis, Wednesday at Dennistoun's, Thursday at Blythe, Friday with Mr. Haig (at McAndrew's old place), Saturday at Dennistoun's, Sunday, Jan. 1st, with Wallis where we had the backwoods delicacy of beaver tails. On Monday we went down to Bobcaygeon to elect Township officers and dine with Need, and on Tuesday came down here.

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* He was a member of the Executive Council (See p xxvii)

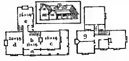
To his Father

Blythe, Feb. 11th, 1837

The last year's grant of £16,000 for our waters, which was reserved for the Royal assent, has been passed, and an Act to amend part of it with an extra £1,000 is in progress; a grant for £70,000 for the Trent has passed the lower house and has been read twice in the upper; the question of the Clergy Reserves seems likely to be at last settled by giving to the English, Scotch, and Roman Catholic churches and some dissenting congregations shares of the fund in proportion to the members of the different sects; the back townships of our district will probably this session be formed into a new district to be called Colborne, with Peterborough as the capital. Farm produce, especially wheat and rye, is enormously high, wheat being sold in the front currently at 8/- and 8/6 where last year 4/- was considered a great price. This is a great thing for farmers who have much to sell, but they are few and I fear it may have a very disadvantageous effect upon the country, as no contractors can be found to undertake the works contemplated next summer whilst provisions are at such a ruinous price. I unfortunately shall not have more than one hundred bushels to sell, but that as far as it goes will yield a handsome profit.

I will answer all your questions and suggestions with regard to the steps which should be taken if you come out. The plan which I have at present in contemplation for the house is the same which I once shewed you when last at home, which I will here append for your guidance.

'Ground floor. From the verandah you will enter into a porch and thence into *b* the hall or whatever you call it. The porch will prevent much cold coming in with you; but as it appears to me that there is no way of keeping a house warm half so effectually as keeping the passages upstairs warm I have made this ante-



room tolerably large with a view of having a stove in it communicating with the chimney of the room *c*, perhaps a Russian stove, of which more anon. From *b* you go to the right into the dining room and to the left into the drawing room, *b* being lighted by a window over the stairs. I then would build the kitchen *e*, a separate house altogether, and join it to the other house by frame work; the intervening space being entered under the stairs, on the right you have the back door and on the left steps going down into the cellars; before you is the door into the kitchen. A back kitchen might be added beyond, and perhaps it would be advisable in building the chimney to have a fireplace on both sides put up even if the back kitchen were not immediately built. This kitchen being a foot lower than the other rooms, when you go upstairs you can get into the upper storey of that part at *f* and

Blythe at the Present Time

afterwards rise two steps more to the landing, out of which go two bed rooms of 14 x 9½ each and a dressing room of 7½ foot square for you and thence into your bedroom. It may strike you that the window of the back room, *g*, looks not into the light of day but into the kitchen part of the building, but as that building is lower than the main one and as the ridge of the roof comes somewhat to the right of the window there will be room enough. Now when I have told you that the height of the rooms is nine feet from floor to floor or eight and a half to the beams you will have all the dimensions of the house. I ought to add that the upper storey is only a half storey, the walls being only four feet high, but as the roof has a great pitch a ceiling may be carried across at eight feet from the floor and thus but a small portion of the roof will be left exposed to admit heat or cold. I should also mention that the three windows in the sitting rooms will be more than four feet broad; the three on the gables upstairs more than three feet and the two dormer windows in the front about three feet; the exact dimensions depending upon the kind of glass which is most convenient to get.

I am aware of many inconveniences attending this kind of house, but all things taken into account and paying some regard to outward appearances I can think of no better. The question must first be decided between log, frame and stone; the latter is too expensive and the frame houses, though hardly more expensive than a good log house, are miserable shells which can never be kept warm. I therefore decided for a good log house, raised on a stone foundation to protect the lower logs and the logs to be hewn square and bedded in mortar; it may afterwards be plastered or papered inside and painted or roughcast outside. Some thing outside should be done to protect the timber, and the unsightliness of the rough logs inside might hereafter be obviated the cheapest by papering—not on the logs but on canvas—though a coat of plaster would be a more effectual safeguard against vermin.

The question being decided in favour of a log house the first objection arises that you cannot safely build a log house of two full stories even if you curtail beyond what is desirable the height of your rooms. You must therefore either build as I propose or be altogether on the ground floor (And here I must observe that I have never felt that being immediately under the roof renders such upper rooms disagreeably hot or cold if you lath and plaster over the rafters.) To the latter plan there are several objections, viz., you must have double the quantity of roofing, which besides the expense opens a double surface to the attacks of rain and snow; you must have a greater number of chimneys which besides the expense exposes you more to fire; thirdly, it is difficult to plan such a house without losing much room in passages, etc., and at best it would be a rambling concern; and fourthly, logs beyond a certain length are very unwieldy and troublesome things to manage and some at least on every side must go the whole length to bind the work well together. This last objection leads me to notice your sketch of a large square double house. It is the simplest and, except for the size of the logs, would be undoubtedly the cheapest; but such a house is difficult to plan without some loss of room in the central part, and at any rate the kitchen must be turned out of doors altogether. It has also another objection, the roof cannot have sufficient pitch, to throw off the wet and snow well, without becoming a very cumbersome affair, and consequently the upper rooms cannot be so lofty as when a narrow house allows you to have a high pitch. However I believe it might be a cheaper house and, from having fewer outside walls, a warmer one, and I will reconsider the matter. The angles in the roof which my house presents and it does not may be another objection; they certainly constitute the chief extra expense, but I have never found them to leak in such houses as I have seen. My outside chimney is also an objection which I do not well see how I can obviate. A Russian stove is a thing I have all along thought of building, but it is such a large affair that I have been somewhat puzzled where to put it. I don't think any of us would like to be deprived of a fireplace in the sitting rooms, but perhaps a stove between the dining room and hall might replace the fire in the former, or the hall might be made a little larger and thus a stove might be introduced into it.

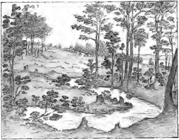
With regard to the cooking stove which you mention, I would certainly oppose such a thing coming from England; there are plenty of cooking stoves of Yankee construction to be bought here with all the coppers, etc., for £10 or £12 and a great convenience they are, though they can never entirely supersede a fireplace in a kitchen. Some I have seen sent out from England are by no means so complete and being intended for coal are very difficult to heat with wood.

I have been thus particular with my description of the house, not only because it will give you an idea what furniture to send out, but because, though if you do come it is unlikely I could wait for an answer to this before commencing operations, yet something

might occur to delay you and leave me time to profit by your remarks and observations.

My mother recommends me not to stint the house of room, but for the reason above stated with regard to log houses they cannot be made very large, and large rooms though pleasant in summer are difficult to heat in winter; perhaps the rooms might be a little extended by making them sixteen instead of fourteen feet wide and then the room on the right might be curtailed in length to fourteen feet, the extra room being given to the entrance hall, which would then afford more room for a stove.

With regard to your stock of wine, though whiskey is the constant beverage of the male sex in this country, yet for ladies and invalids and occasional festivals a little wine is necessary and of course your best way would be to exchange your stock for wine in bond. But I would make this suggestion, that port is a wine which if once touched with frost is spoiled for ever, and who shall ensure it against such risk in this country, indeed I never tasted a good glass of port here yet. Sherry and madeira on the contrary are uninjured by frost even if frozen quite solid and are said rather to be improved by it, as they are by heat, so that it is a common thing to put a pipe of madeira in the garret, I hear, where it may be mellowed by the extremes of heat and cold. Another thing I would recommend, that it should come out in the wood with an outside casing to resist depredation, and not in bottle. My wine is arrived but as it is still in Wallis's cellar at the Falls I know nothing of its safety, though a certain jingling in one of the cases makes me rather fear for the contents.



VIEW OF BLYTHE, AFTER ADDITION IN 1841

From a sketch by Anne Langton

Now as a suggestion in case of any more parcels or of your coming out. The Bibles and prayer books you sent out are all gone and numerous applications for more—the Bibles especially, but the testaments do not please. Some Bibles of a cheaper description and a few like the last for old eyes and a few more prayer books would be acceptable. Secondly, you know that I was once very full of the study of the controversy respecting the seniority of Latin and Italian. I have collected a whole volume full of facts bearing upon that subject, which have led me to a very different conclusion from yours and the Italians, but I have never met with though often sought for any book with a regular argument on the other side. My hours of classical study are now few and far between, but I have still a hankering after the old hobby, and chancing a month or two ago to see an advertisement of a book purporting to be what I wanted, I wrote down the title and if it is not too dear should like to get it, it is this: *Raynouard—Influence de la langue romane rustique sur les langues de l'Europe latine*, 8vo.

As to the church you may rest easy that I will not make myself the laughing stock of the others as you say by doing more than I am called upon to do. I never mentioned to any one what I said about the one hundred acres to you, but even with a view to increasing the value of my own property, I could not dispose of one hundred acres more advantageously. Jameson and Wallis should certainly do the most of any as they will be the principal pecuniary gainers, but Jameson is a mule that will neither be led or driven, and I never expect one farthing from him or his friends. Wallis is anxious enough about it, but he has already had so much thrown upon his shoulders by Jameson that he is loath to do anything more than he is obliged to do. Still I have him now distinctly tied down to my previous proposals with the exception of the land and I have no doubt of getting that too from him when we see an actual prospect of a clergyman. I said in my last letter that we should soon draw for our funds as the exchange was so high, and we should have done so had I not missed Wallis before he went to New York. I intended to take the occasion of drawing that money to state, that unless we could come to some settlement as to how the land was to be procured I would not allow the money to be called for. I have tried to come to a coalition of funds with Atthill, whose father being the Dean of Clogher might do much for us both in London and the north of Ireland, but he feels bound to Need, and nothing I feel convinced will be done by them. Need I tried upon the subject but got nothing but vague answers, though I offered that the clergyman should live at whichever end of the lake raised the most subscriptions and should do duty at both alternately. The stumbling block appears to be that Need wanted to beautify his village with a church* which I insisted should run away with none of the funds. I still hope that we may carry the thing through this summer; sooner or later there is no doubt of it, but the great thing is to do it before the Society have time to cool. The new arrangement of the proceeds of the Clergy Reserves which is in its progress through parliament may do something for us; at any rate if it is successful it may get us a grant of land.

Feb. 13th. As to the church we have £350 which at the present exchange is about £430 currency or more, and even at six per cent. you may say £27 per annum;

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* See note p. 166

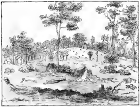
but if we buy bank stock or other security will probably give more than £30. Besides we have no account yet of Wallis's Irish subscriptions and perhaps there may be some addition to his and Dennistoun's Scotch subscriptions; so that we shall I doubt not make up the £35 per annum I told the Bishop we expected to guarantee and which he only half reading or understanding my letter wrote to the Society that we had guaranteed. Judging from his letters he is a very slovenly lazy personage. I have consented that some small subscriptions we expect here should go to the building of the parsonage and church.

To his Brother

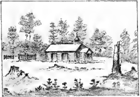
Blythe, March 10th, 1837

Our church affairs look much more flourishing. I have drawn on B. Heywood & Co. for £200 sterling for which we shall get ten or eleven per cent., making £248. Wallis has a similar amount and letters from Jameson's friends promise from £100 to £150 sterling more, making in all between £600 and £700 currency. For £200 of this we get eight per cent. from the Peterborough church and probably shall get as much for the rest on the best security. What we have lent out is only for one year, as we intend to invest in bank stock. I think we may fairly calculate upon £50 currency per annum, which with the Society's grant will be sufficient. Besides which, Atthill, seeing no chance at the other end of the lake of anything being done, has promised to join us, and as his father is a dignitary of the church we may get some handsome addition that way. A Rev. Mr. Wade, a Church missionary, has been making his rounds and fell ill at Atthill's where he was detained some weeks. He has taken a fancy to the place and wishes to get the appointment; having some independent fortune he is in treaty for the purchase of a farm for his son on the lake, a fine lad now at the College at Toronto. He has also applied to purchase two town lots at the Falls. I know little of him but he appears a very gentlemanly man of about forty-five, and his having a wife and family is a great recommendation. Atthill, who knows something of his family and has seen more of him, speaks highly of him. When I last saw him he was too unwell to speak of business, but when he recovers Wallis and I mean to speak to him on the subject and request the Bishop to appoint him. Should we not be able to get land from the Government, Wallis will give two town lots at the Falls whereon we will build a house for him, or if he wants a better house than we intended we will do towards it as much as we intended. We have petitioned for a grant of land and shall probably get an answer in a fortnight. I stated in the petition our pledges to the Society and the subscribers and requested the government to enable us to fulfil them; whether I shall succeed I doubt, for the Clergy Reserves question still remains unsettled, and the Scotch are making a great stir about former endowments As Mr. Wade wishes to reside in the village and will have a farm of his own independently it will be of less consequence, if he gets the appointment.

Parliament is prorogued and we now know the results of the session. They certainly have been very Tory altogether; there is no fear of any alteration in the constitution from them and the most important question of all, the Clergy Reserve question, they have left as they found it. This has been almost the only



THE CHURCH HILL AT FENELON FALLS



THE CHURCH AT FENELON FALLS

From sketches by Anne Langton

question upon which any main principle has been discussed; there has been discussion however enough in all conscience, but its only object has been to decide who should get the greatest share of the public money. The old Parliament did nothing in the shape of improving the country, the present one I fear has been doing too much. To every public work which was proposed they have granted a charter and advanced money till towards the close of the session it began to be a question whether half the money could be raised; and consequently to meet this difficulty clauses were introduced into all the money bills, at the eleventh hour, suspending operations until the governor in council should authorize the works to commence. I cannot say I like this, it gives too much power to a person wholly irresponsible to the parties granting and paying the money. We for instance have got £77,000 for the Trent, subject to the above condition; suppose only half the whole sums granted can be raised, what is to hinder Sir Francis from stopping our work altogether and laying out all the sum granted on the Hamilton railway or some other work. We shall have however £16,000 spent on our lake and at Peterborough without any such clog, and we have been formed into a new District, called Colborne, of which Peterborough is the capital. These are the two measures which principally affect us.

I accuse our Parliament of granting too much money; but they fall into the shade alongside the new State of Michigan. Michigan was made a state this winter and they forthwith incurred a debt of $5,000,000 to commence constructing three great railroads from one end of the State to the other. This system of going ahead seems to have answered in the States

but I doubt whether there is sufficient spirit amongst us to carry the system through.

To his Father

Blythe, 7th May, 1837

In reply to your letter of the 15th February I would have written sooner (though I have not much answer to make), had the climate permitted; but we seem getting worse every year here in that respect. In the spring of '34 the ice left us on the 12th April, and it has since put off its departure to the 26th April and 5th May and 6th May in the following years. This is getting very near midsummer, and at this rate it will soon reach it. I have nothing further to communicate than this, that in consequence of the lateness of the season you must delay your departure from England a little.

I have made a contract for putting up the house, after a great deal of difficulty and uncertainty about getting anybody to undertake it, but no commencement has yet been made and I cannot promise that the house will be ready to receive you till the end of August. We cannot here command hands to any extent, and the difficulty of getting provisions this year is an extra obstacle. In the course of a few days I now expect to make a commencement, but you had better not be in too great a hurry for it would be very unpleasant if you were to arrive before there was a roof to shelter you.

Did I tell you too that I had written to the Bishop to request him to appoint Mr. Wade to our church, but answering letters does not seem his Lordship's forte. He must have received this last letter for I paid the postage, thinking that had been the obstacle to former letters. I certainly did not tell you that the Government have refused to grant us any land I do not think it is worth while to trouble Lord Glenelg about it. Our only ground of application would be this—that at the time of my visit to England glebes were always assigned to churches by Government, and that upon the strength of that we bound ourselves to the Society to clear and build upon the glebe. Upon my return when we wished to fulfil our engagements we could get no land to clear and build upon. I will have a cabinet council upon the subject with my colleagues and if we think a memorial desirable it will accompany this letter.

EXTRACTS FROM LETTERS OF THE TRANSITION PERIOD

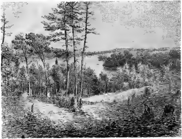
EXTRACTS FROM OCCASIONAL LETTERS AFTER 1837

[The series of early letters closed in 1837 with the arrival of his chief correspondent, his father, in Canada. Letters after this are addressed to his brother in England, who copied portions of the correspondence concerned with the transition stage of life in the back lakes. Such of these portions as seem to have permanent interest form the contents of this division of the letters.]

HOW TO ADD TO FARMING SOME OTHER MEANS OF MAKING MONEY

Oct. 21, 1844

The complaints are universal of the difficulty of making a living by farming, and I feel no doubt, after giving it a fair trial, that in the present state of affairs it is not to be done. Still I cannot bring myself to think of giving up the farm, for the chances will certainly improve every year and in time even farming alone will probably become more profitable. Were there any other means of making a little money to help the farm, the kind of life is one which I should prefer to any other, and though agriculture alone is a poor prospect, you may live better on a small sum on a farm than anywhere else. The question is what other means of money-making there are, and it is a question which I have asked myself and others five hundred times without getting any satisfactory answer. Ways of making money there doubtless are, but almost any I can think of involve the necessity of moving to a more civilized neighbourhood and it is exactly this which I want to avoid. A steamboat would have the advantage of improving the country more perhaps than anything, but the chances of profit are not very encouraging and the risk and capital to be expended are great. At present the thing is out of the question because the public works from want of funds are at a standstill and it will be probably two years before the whole line will be opened. A distillery on my own creek in connection with the farm, and a store principally intended to buy grain for the distillery would I believe produce enough, but there are objections even in the way of this. My mother is most decidedly and strongly opposed to it on the score of morality, as she thinks a facility of procuring whiskey would be an injury to the country. Besides this a bill has been introduced into our House of Assembly for imposing an excise of sixpence per gallon on whiskey (about thirty per cent. on its value), which will have the effect of throwing the business into large establishments. This I conceive would be the case even in a cash country like England, but in a country like this, where it is always difficult to obtain cash for any article whilst the tax would have to be paid in money, I think it would have the effect of entirely knocking small distilleries on the head . . . [A distillery] would very well dovetail into a farm for, besides consuming the surplus grain, the feeding of pork and beef is one of the main profits of a distillery and the farm might be principally devoted to rearing stock. The store would certainly pay and that permanently, but it requires there to be something else to bring customers to a store. Those who brought their grain to the



View from Blythe Looking Towards Fenelon Falls

A pen and ink drawing by Anne Langton

"Moving to a more civilized neighbourhood is exactly [what] I want to avoid"

distillery would lay out the proceeds at the store, but if the former were given up they would take their grain and with it their custom elsewhere, and leave for the unsupported store only the custom of those who had no grain to sell. I think I have before said to you that I know of no money-making business in Canada except the Law, storekeeping, tavern keeping and perhaps I may add horse-dealing. The two latter we will altogether omit. Storekeeping is decidedly the most money-making and is carried on with very little capital, but it appears to me that those who make it pay are invariably those who have started with next to nothing and have gradually crept up in the world, increasing their business as their capital, custom and experience increased; I hardly recollect an instance of any who have succeeded in planting a full grown tree.

LUMBERING

April 1st [1849]

The more I see and learn of the lumber trade the more I like its prospects. As the lumber is consumed nearer market it must be sought for further and further back, and we on the spot have many advantages. This year's spec. will be a feeler. I entertain no doubt at all of its paying handsomely, though it is in a very small way but enables us to gain experience cheap. If we see a prospect of its really turning out a business worth while following we shall be better able to extend it another year. There is a limit below which it will hardly be profitable to lumber, as it requires as many hands, ropes, anchors, etc, to take a small raft down as a large one almost, but on the other hand those who take more than one good raft down lose the advantage of personal supervision and the extent of the stuff in one stream delays them where time is the great object. *In medio tutissimus* is the rule here, and the middle course appears always safe. The great source of failure among lumberers is their sinking their capital in securing a field to work on, often long before they use it, and otherwise extending their business so much beyond their means as [to] have to get advances from the Montreal and Quebec men, who thus get all the profit. This is the Scylla which Nicholls is always cautioning me against; better far, if your means fail, sell your raft half way than get advances to take it on. One disadvantage we labour under here. We are so far from market that we must hurry, often at great additional expense, to get down at all in one season, and then arrive late. Now the early rafts generally fetch so much more than the late ones, as they can be stripped the same season, that this is matter of great importance. Nicholls' advice is not to attempt it, but only to go at your ease as far as you can the first spring and then lay up, when you can be early in the market the next year. I think the advice is sound, as a season has to be lost somewhere in all probability, and it is better to lose it before all the expense of transit has been incurred than after. This year, however, we shall push through at all events as it is of importance to us not only to get a return for our outlay but also to gain a general knowledge of the whole route and of many details of the business which can only be learned experimentally. I think in a former letter I estimated we should have 200 spars and that the cost of going to Quebec might be divided into three equal shares of £1 per stick each; the first when on the lake, the second at Peterborough and the third from

Peterborough to Quebec; the middle portion being the most risky and uncertain. Now this year we began too late and began at a wrong place first, so that the winter broke up whilst we had still twenty spars made in the wood and thirty more to make which but for that mistake we should have on the lake now. However we have upwards of 180 out and at a cost of not 15/- each. As to the next stage we were offered a contract to take them down at £1, so that £3 we may safely say they will not exceed; and of that nearly £1, consisting of wages of raftsmen, lockage, towage, etc., are not payable, by the custom of the trade, till the raft reaches its destination. I feel little doubt that we shall make 100 per cent. of it or nearly it.

Peterborough, 23rd May, 1849

Your assistance comes very seasonably, for the burden of the adventure is likely to fall upon me. My two companions in the business are as opposite as light and darkness. Boyd* is an Irishman whose blood got an extra boiling by being born in India, and all the Flemish blood of the Dunsfords has been concentrated in Jem.† You might as well yoke a wild horse with an exceedingly sedate ox as get those two to pull together.

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* See note p. 152.

† James Wicks Dunsford, eldest son of the Rev. James Hartley Dunsford who brought his family to Canada in 1837. His second son Hartley, and Mr. George Bick, his coachman, afterwards well known in lumbering circles, arrived a year earlier to build a house which was appropriately called *The Beehive*, large enough to contain Mr. Dunsford's numerous family. The family in time moved to Peterborough where Mr. Dunsford became editor of The Peterborough Gazette, and published in it a readable historical novel called *The State Messengers*. Mr. James Dunsford remained to farm The Beehive land, but when Sturgeon Lake was abandoned by his neighbours he too gave up farming and took up the practice of law for which he had become qualified before leaving England. He was for sixteen years a member of the District and County Councils and from 1861 represented the County of Victoria in the old parliament of Canada.

For this reason Jem has all along held back and now may be said to have no share in the business, but if another year he can have the entire superintendence of some branch of the business where his gravity will not be decomposed by the vivacity of the other, he still wants to join us; and as a staid ox is sometimes a very valuable animal, I think such a department may be found. As for Boyd he is admirably adapted in many respects for the work he is at. When a raft is once started almost every thing must yield to despatch, and a restless being who can keep himself and everything that comes in contact with him in a state of excitement for two or three months at a time is just the man to drive a river. He may want a curb at other times but there you may give him the reins. The worst is that his expected remittance has not yet arrived though I have in my pocket a letter which I think contains it. At all events things must be kept going, and I am not at all sorry to have more than my share of the speculation as long as I have the means to do it. There are not many pursuits in which ups and downs succeed each other more rapidly than in running a raft. The detention of our raft in the ice for a fortnight, when every other place was open, with expenses running on at the rate of £2 a day was very trying to the patience, and I was not at all sorry that Boyd was attending his wife at the time. At our first rapid at Bobcaygeon, which Boyd got through last year in a day, everything went wrong and we were a week. Just below we were detained three days by a head wind, and I understand Boyd was quite unapproachable. Then the good qualities began to operate, for in spite of head wind and horrible weather, with the whole raft a sheet of ice, he kept all hands at work for two days and nights and when the rest gave in he stuck at it with only two others and got to Buckhorn rapids which had he not reached that night there would have been another week's delay. Now came a turn of good luck to compensate for our unpropitious commencement. Last year he was three weeks at Buckhorn and left sixteen spars behind—this year we got through in a day and a half and got all his sixteen spars into the bargain The next place is Burleigh rapids which I have never seen in high water, but how a raft ever gets through there is a mystery to me. I do not know any particular time they left Buckhorn but there was a report here to-day that he had got through. After Burleigh comes the river above this place, nine miles of consecutive rapids The process is to break up the raft and commit the spars to the stream. About an hour after that perhaps two or three sticks reach Peterborough, the rest are left sticking here and there on rocks, dams and islands. The men follow them down clearing everything before them, which is called driving. Each stick they release of course is soon brought up by some other lower down, and as you advance the jams, as they are called, of course get worse and worse. The method of proceeding in each case requires great judgment. Sometimes you fix a windlass or have horses on shore, sometimes the men go on to the jam and loosen the sticks with handspikes, and sometimes you have to sacrifice a spar by chopping it. Occasionally you have to take off each stick singly as you would pick out spillikins, at other times a little judicious prying and shaking the holding stick will loosen twenty or thirty. You may imagine what ticklish work it is to be standing upon a jam, or up to your middle in the water along side of one, when it begins to give way. I have seen a piece of timber perhaps sixty or seventy feet long forced almost clean out of water. It is a hard and dangerous life, but they are a lighthearted set of dare devils and the greatest rascals and thieves withal that ever a peaceable country was tormented with. Hen roosts have quite disappeared from the river side, and lambs and little pigs have to be kept under lock and key. This year the river has been very easy to run and I hope, in spite of our detention, the expense will not exceed my original estimate.

June 18th, 1849

Our lumber after all sorts of ups and downs, sometimes getting easily through bad places and being awfully detained at easy ones, has got to Peterborough at last, with the loss of only four sticks left behind and available for next year and one spoiled. As an illustration of the uncertain freaks of the Goddess that presides over lumber I may mention that we had two bad sticks, a crooked one and an unsound one, which we meant to leave behind, but like the bottle imp we never could get rid of them. The crooked one went over everything without touching and reached Peterborough where it lay exposed to public view, to our confusion and disgrace, one whole month before it was joined by its fellows. The unsound one formed the foundation of almost every jam in the river, and even after it was cut in two parts pertinaciously annoyed us all the way. My first estimate of the cost down to Peterborough was £2 or £2.5s per stick, but I do not think they have cost more than £1. 10s or £1. 15s at farthest. £1 more will certainly take them down to Quebec. What they will fetch there it is impossible to find out. Nobody will tell who knows, and very few know anything about that description of lumber. I knew a raft last year of seventy, of which the twenty best sold for £8; and we hear on good authority that the owner was offered £5. 10s for the rest this spring. Now we have very few as bad as his best, and I have bad pointed out one or two of ours which they say are worth £20 or £25. This looks well but per contra I learned from the manager of one of the larger lumbering firms at Quebec that the annual demand is only for about 2,000 pieces and that their house is concerned in about 1,500; but he adds that there is always a demand for such sticks as some of ours which he saw, and I don't think be saw our best. We are working in a great measure in the dark, but Boyd will go on to Quebec. I think I shall try to run down there also when the raft has arrived, to try to learn something of our trade. Cummings, the manager above mentioned, told me that one of their foremen had reduced the value of a mast for them at least £50 by cutting it a few feet too short. When trifles make such important differences one ought to spare no pains to get information. There is a legal length to a certain thickness you must know, and our men insisted that extra length beyond what was due to the girth was all thrown away. I however got them all cut as long as they would go and Boyd came after me and ordered them after they were drawn to be cut to the right length, but I stopped it after one was cut. Again after we had stuck half the day and nearly killed our oxen with one which I had laid out twenty-five feet over the length I began to change my mind and directed them to be cut shorter for the future, but going down to Peterborough next day Boyd came and countermanded me, so in the end almost all are over length which Cummings says may make a difference in their value of several hundred pounds—in some the extra length may be only an incumbrance, in other it may be worth 10/- or 15/- a foot.

As soon as the flies are not quite so bad, and some at least of my month's occupations are chalked off I mean to go out lumber hunting. I hope we shall have capital for a larger spec. next year. I think we now know of the materials for a raft as large as this year's near home, but the place I am going to look at will be a two years' business and we have our eye on a third place, if we are not forestalled, which would keep us busy for some time.

I can see the rock, which Nicholls is always warning me of, on which most lumberers split, viz., the consuming of their capital in purchasing land and the right to lumber for future operations, to keep others out of the field. It must be kept well in mind, but it is very tempting. I can see also how lumberers come to be such rascals generally. The men steal hens and their masters steal trees. I suspect it is as dangerous a rock as the other.

I believe it is a safe rule when you wish to put a case of conscience that the wish is answer enough. Query. Do you stick firmly to steal not at all or do you make any difference in the person stolen from? Would you allow of stealing from the Queen or make any difference between land she had taken possession of by surveying and unsurveyed land? Would you steal from concession lines which the Queen has given to the public but the timber on which the Council, on what authority I know not, have given to the roads; and would your being Warden of that Council make any difference? Would you (in case you should in any case allow of stealing from individuals) make any difference if an individual in question were your friend—

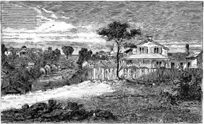
if you had offered to buy his timber or his land and he had refused—if you did not know and could not find out who owned the land? Or would you abolish the word steal and only take, remain probably in ignorance of any ownership but be willing to pay for what you take when the ownership is proved to your satisfaction? I believe ninety-nine lumberers out of a hundred answer all these questions in their own favour and do many much more barefaced things.

Later than 18th June

The raft is now fairly at Peterborough which by its whiskey is as great an impediment to progress as the waters of any rapid. It is very trying to the patience, but it is not to be wondered at that the men after all their privations and hardships should get away as we call it here on the spree. This being a point in the journey where the kind of navigation changes, we pay off some of our hands. At the mouth of the Trent we pay off some more, and then the only expenses are towage when required, as the government lockage and the pilotage are generally I believe always payable after the raft gets down. It is well it is so for Boyd is unable to contribute anything in the way of cash. Any expenses below the mouth of the Trent James Dunsford has taken upon himself. As long as our personal superintendence did not take us away from home we each did what we could with [out] counting days, but from Buckhorn downward Boyd is to be allowed $14 a month, the rate of an ordinary good hand, and he is the best we have. He will go on to Quebec.

The thermometer above ninety degrees—I was travelling all the time as much by night as by day and in every kind of conveyance.

LETTERS ABOUT AUDITING THE PUBLIC ACCOUNTS



THE HOUSE IN PETERBOROUGH 1852-55

From a water colour drawing by Anne Langton

LETTERS OF 1855 AND 1856

From John A. Macdonald[*] to John Langton

Quebec, 6th February, 1855

Confidential

My dear Langton,

I have had continually before my eyes our last conversation, and under the impression that you had finally made up your mind to retire from Parliament, I spoke to Oliphant[†] and subsequently to Lord Bury[‡] and Sir Edmund Head[§] about your appointment to the office of Indian agent vice [*undecipherable*] dismissed. The salary is about £350. I may say I had secured the appointment for you when on my return Cayley[**] showed me your letter saying you had resolved to return to Quebec. I was glad to hear this as I think you worthy of a better office than settling the quarrels of demoralized Redmen with still more demoralized

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[*] The Hon. (afterwards Sir) John Alexander Macdonald (1815-1891), member of the Legislative Assembly for Kingston, and attorney-general for Canada West

[†] Laurence Oliphant (1829-1888), secretary to Lord Elgin. In 1854 he was appointed superintendent of Indian affairs, and made a journey to Lake Superior which he described in a volume entitled *Minnesota and the Far West* (Edinburgh, 1855). He returned to England soon after Lord Elgin's retirement at the end of 1854.

[‡] William Coutts Keppel, Viscount Bury (1832-1891). He was superintendent of Indian affairs in Canada from 1854 to 1857.

[§] Sir Edmund Walker Head, Bart. (1805-1868), who succeeded Lord Elgin as governor-general of Canada on December 19, 1854. He remained in office until October 24, 1861

[**] The Hon. William Cayley (1807-1890), member for Huron in the Legislative Assembly, and inspector-general from 1845 to 1848 and from 1854 to 1858.

Whites. Another position now offers itself for which your habit of mind eminently qualifies you, and if you do not object I have no doubt that it will be at your service whenever you please.

It is very fortunate for Cayley that Mackenzie[*] has made such an opportune exposé of the way affairs have been conducted in the different public departments. He is now called upon, without an insidious prying into the affairs of the other departments, to institute a searching enquiry into the management and accounts of all the Bureaux. You know his office is that of "Inspector General of Accounts" and that the office originally was that of Auditor General. By degrees the Customs and financial business of the Province came under his jurisdiction, though not under his patent of office, and these have now become his sole business. His duties of auditor having in fact become obsolete, I suggested to Cayley the resumption of his old duties, and the forming an audit department with a departmental head and suitable staff—the head to have the same position as Cary[†] the head of the financial branch or Bouchette[‡] as head of the customs branch. The salary to be say £500. Cayley at once approved of the suggestion and we simultaneously said you were the man to command the ship. It is proposed to come down to the House with the plan to give the Audit Branch a permanent habitation and a name by virtue of an Act of Parliament, fixing by statute its duties, salaries, etc. This will give it more weight in the country and over the officers of government who are public accountants, than if established by mere order in Council. This would [not] permit the office being established till the end of the session, which would I fancy be rather agreeable to your views than otherwise. There is a point worthy of every consideration in this matter, about which we can talk when we meet. Meanwhile think over it. Shall the audit officer be eligible for parliament? If he is, and has in fact a seat, he becomes a political personage, and is subject to change on every change of government. This, as far as you are concerned, I think would be no objection. Then a question arises whether a political officer's report would have the same weight as that of a non-political person. Cayley thinks not, I differ. Under the principles of responsibility some member of the Government must produce under his responsibility the reports of the Audit office. In fact the report must be that of the Inspector General and therefore must be political. It seems to me that it would be well to have the audit officer in Parliament ready to answer all questions and debate all matters relative to the public accounts,—just as in England the Secretary of the Treasury is always in Parliament acting as efficient aid to the Chancellor of the Exchequer. So much for this.

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[*] William Lyon Mackenzie (1795-1861), member of the Legislative Assembly for Haldimand from 1851 to 1858, and one of the principal spokesmen of the Clear Grit party.

[†] Joseph Cary, deputy minister of finance, 1842-1863.

[‡] Robert Shore Milnes Bouchette (1805-1879), a former rebel of 1837, who became commissioner of customs in 1861.

You see we have made extensive changes in Lower Canada—and though not so complete as a bystander would wish, I can assure you that we went as far as was practicable. Morris* had resolved not to go to Toronto, and as some change ought to be made and *must* have been made *now*, we thought it better to commence at once, rather than have the thing partially done now and finished next summer. Cauchon[*] brings strength and energy, Lemieux[†] commands more votes among the Franco-Canadians than any other person in Lower Canada, and his appointment stops a mischievous re-agitation of the Seigniorial Bill question. He will not set the St. Lawrence on fire, but he is a shrewd common sense man, and understands human nature as his unlimited influence in the District of Quebec shows. As we have pledged ourselves to spend no money without the previous sanction of Parliament and afterwards under Order in Council there can be no more *Piers*[‡] and he can do no harm.

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* Probably the Hon. William Morris (1786-1858), who had been receiver-general in the Draper administration from 1844 to 1846, and president of the council from 1846 to 1846. He retired from public life in 1853, and died in Montreal on June 29, 1858.

Cartier[§] is active—too much so—and will do his work. The chief necessity for appointing him was that the large and important District of Montreal was altogether unrepresented in the Cabinet except by Drummond,[**] who has no property in Montreal and represents a township constituency.

[*] The Hon. Joseph Edouard Cauchon (1816-1885), member of the Legislative Assembly for Montmorency since 1844. In January, 1855, he became commissioner of crown lands, in succession to the Hon. A. N. Morin. He resigned the office in 1857.

[†] The Hon. François Xavier Lemieux (1811-1864), member of the Legislative Assembly for Lévis from 1854 to 1861, chief commissioner of public works from January, 1855 to 1857.

[‡] While waiting for a steamer, on the Long pier at Rivière du Loup, one day some fifteen years after the date of this letter, Sir John Macdonald, who was waiting too, told us that the pier had been the occasion of turning a government out of power.—*W. A. L.*

[§] The Hon. (afterwards Sir) George Etienne Cartier (1814-1873), member of the Legislative Assembly for the county of Verchères, 1848-1861. On January 25, 1856, he became provincial secretary in the MacNab-Taché ministry, and on May 24, 1856, attorney-general for Canada East in the Taché-Macdonald ministry.

[**] The Hon. Lewis Thomas Drummond (1813-1882), member for Shefford in the Legislative Assembly, and attorney-general for Canada East, 1851-1856. He resigned his office when the Taché-Macdonald ministry was formed in May, 1856.

WILLIAM LANGTON

Were you not glad to see old Badgley* housed for life? We had a good deal of difficulty but were firm. Let me hear from you soon. You will be down at the beginning of the session I hope.

Yours very faithfully,
JOHN A. MACDONALD

John Langton, Esq.
Peterborough.

FROM JOHN LANGTON TO HIS BROTHER, WM. LANGTON

Toronto, Dec. 30th, 1855

MY DEAR WILLIAM,

Having been now more than a month installed in my office I must give you some account of it and of the prospects of work before me and of the probability of my getting on pretty comfortably. First my relations with Cayley have been satisfactory enough. He has fulfilled his pledge of leaving me entirely to myself to do what I like, though I have some little complaint to make about my freedom of choice in my assistants. I found three clerks there who had been more or less attached to the Audit branch of his office, none of them worth much but two are practicable enough. One of them however I blame Cayley for saddling me with. He is a black sheep who has been transferred from one department to another and found quite impracticable in all—utterly useless and worse than useless. Cayley knew this as well as I do and it was a mere excuse that they sent him to me with some books which be used to keep and which are now in my branch, because in fact, though he ought to have kept them, they never could trust him to do it. I have seriously remonstrated for he is in receipt of a higher salary than anybody in my office and is utterly useless to me. I have told Cayley that I have no objection to his drawing his salary and sitting there, but I will not be responsible for finding him work as I cannot trust to the accuracy of anything he does. I think I shall get rid of him before long. I have introduced three more clerks and mean to get two more. My chief clerk I have in my eye but have not yet selected and do not mean to do [so] till I get the work into something like order.

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* The Hon. William Badgley (1801-1887), member for Missisquoi county in the Legislative Assembly. He had been attorney-general for Canada East in the Draper administration, 1847-48, but he was not included in the MacNab-Morin government of 1854. In January, 1855, he was appointed a judge of the Superior Court of Lower Canada.

Then as to my colleagues in the Board of Audit—one I find a very easy-going man, the chief Commissioner of Customs, who keeps his own branch well audited and is not disposed to trouble himself with any other. He will sit occasionally at the board, but will clearly give me neither assistance nor trouble. The other who has just been appointed deputy Inspector General has risen from book-keeper and is nothing but a book-keeper still. He seems however an honest fellow and really desirous that everything should be straight, and from long experience in the office has been very useful in putting me up to its ways. He evidently entertains a most deferential respect for me and will give me no trouble except with a few crotchets which he has. One is an old jealousy between the book-keepers of the Inspector and Receiver General's * departments who never can get their books to agree though repre-

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* The Hon. (afterwards Sir) Etienne Pascal Taché (1795-1865), had been receiver-general since November, 1849. On May 23, 1856, he was appointed a life member of the Legislative Council, and on April 15 he was elected speaker of that body, but he continued to act also as receiver-general.

senting the same transactions, and each of course blames the other. Some years ago two sets of books exactly similar were opened for the two departments and it was intended they should be a check upon each other and that they ought exactly to correspond. I think this was a mistake, for the means of information of the two are different, and even if two book-keepers took the same day book as their basis I doubt whether they would produce from it similar books. The Receiver General receives and pays, but the accounts which show how the money comes to be received and why paid are kept in the Inspector General's office. A warrant comes down for counter signature to the Receiver General and this is his only means of knowing to which account it is to be placed; and if the warrant does not properly express that on the face of it, he is not to blame if he enters it to a different account to the Inspector General. Or a cross entry may be made properly enough by the Inspector General of the reason of which the Receiver General knows nothing. So with receipts. But it is not often that there is £600,000 discrepancy as in Glen Mills & Co.* account this year in the two offices, in which by the bye the Receiver General was right and the Inspector General wrong, arising out of an issue of debentures to the Grand Trunk R. R. or rather to Glen Mills & Co. to be held for the Province and paid to Grand Trunk R. R. on certain conditions. My friend Dickenson, late book-keeper now deputy Inspector General, considers his books as the true standard and thinks the Receiver General should compare with them at stated intervals and make them agree, which would render them useless as independent records. The Receiver General book-keeper wants everything to be reported to him in detail, so as to be a duplicate Inspector General book keeper. I think both are wrong. The warrants and bank certificates, etc., should contain on the face of them sufficient information as to the account to which they are applicable—which now they do not, or only a pencil endorsation made by a clerk unconnected with the book keeper—and the Receiver General should not attempt too great a refinement in the subdivision of accounts of which he can know nothing. Though the items might differ the large heads of income and expenditure and the totals would then agree, and if there was a disagreement it would be not without its use in pointing out accounts which were not sufficiently defined and understood. Another of his weak points is that he wants our main attention to be turned to points which have attracted notice, so as to be ready to answer and defend the office when Parliament meets. I want to find out anything that is wrong though never heard of before, and set right what is known. He wants to shew that the Inspector General's department is not to blame. He has also some pet ideas, not of a very enlarged kind, which he bothers me with sometimes, but altogether he is a decent fellow and is no impediment to me.

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* Glyn, Mills and Company who, with Baring Brothers and Company, had been in 1852 the London financial agents for the Province of Canada and bankers for the Grand Trunk Railway.

I told you I had been at work for more than a month, but of the accounts of 1855 which ought to be audited and printed by the end of February I have as yet only succeeded in getting hold of minute fractious, so that I despair of ever getting through with them when they do come. Hitherto I have been principally engaged with arrears which may be postponed, and in correspondence to hurry on the rendering of sufficient accounts, and getting explanations as to the system of keeping the books in different departments. I have succeeded however, not without some opposition, in introducing a system for the future of quarterly instead of annual returns which will make work more smooth hereafter. This question of arrears is a ticklish one. I do not like to commit myself to going back to any fixed time with all accounts, but with some it will be very necessary; and in some of the departments I find a great disinclination to let me go back, which as you may imagine only makes me the more anxious to do so. But in the audit itself there are several difficulties which present themselves. As to payments—was the money paid? Of course a voucher should be produced to show it was—but was the work done or service rendered which the money is payable for? It is not often we get such an item as appeared in last year's Public Accounts, in a page immediately following a whole host of £1. 2. 3's and £5. 3. 6's, viz., "Benjamin Chaffey and others, for services on the St. Lawrence canals," fifty odd thousand pounds. A detail was asked for and sixty three items given, of which Benjamin Chaffey got one of about £6,000, and, amongst others, two convents in Montreal got between them £35,000 for land bought of them. But supposing we have the whole sixty-three vouchers, were there not some explanations wanted about this purchase of land—how much, at what price, what wanted for, by whose orders? The information on such points is generally very vague and incomplete, and it is difficult to draw a line where to stop in requiring details. It is clear that I cannot measure whether Benjamin Chaffey did the number of yards of embankment he is paid for, or whether the powder bought for blasting was really delivered or, if delivered, used. I must stop at the certificate of some responsible servant of the public somewhere, (I rarely find any however except for large sums where no details are given), and if I am so to stop, where am I to do so? As far [as] concerns any real check I question whether I gain anything more by keeping a clerk engaged all day in checking a pile of small tradesmen's bills consisting of dozens of items each of so many pounds of such a thing at so much a pound, all amounting to £100 or so, than by passing an item of £10,000 paid to a contractor for work done, when I have neither his contract nor any means of knowing whether the work was really done. One fellow has a very original notion of a voucher—he sends me his own cheque on the bank payable to himself or bearer as a voucher for certain payments which I have no doubt he did make with the money he drew. The idea is too innocent to allow of the supposition of the man being a rogue. As far as I have gone as yet into the Board of Works accounts I find the most scrupulous detail in small things and the most suspicious vagueness in the larger items. I have not yet come to asking further explanations, and when I do so I am much puzzled to know how far to require details.

Then supposing a voucher produced that the money was paid and a certificate that the service was rendered, another question arises—was the expenditure authorized? The Act is silent upon this point. It is contended by some that the auditor should certify before payment that the payment is authorized, and this seems to be to a certain extent the practice in England by an officer of the Treasury, but that clearly is no duty of mine here. After payment however am I to say whether it is authorized? Cayley says yes if not authorized by Act or Order in Council (I know many such), but this will not be sufficient for others who will want to know whether Act or Order in Council. I think I shall distinguish, that is report, all payments on Order in Council alone, but this will be difficult unless I can get them to keep their appropriation book better than it has been done and get them to enter on the face of the warrant on account of what appropriation, or if not of what Order in Council, and furnish me with a list of all warrants—and even this will not do unless the Board of Works when they send for a warrant enter in their certificate, which they do not always do by any means, on account of what appropriation.

Then as to receipts, something in the shape of vouchers is often required and is more difficult to manage Our Superintendent of Education [*] gets £3,000 a year to supply school libraries, and he sends me as vouchers of his outlay booksellers' receipts and tells me he has sold to schools some £2,000. Now how can I tell whether he has not received more, for as his accounts are not published we have not even that check upon him. I remember when I was Warden saving the county many hundred pounds by compelling the Treasurer to give receipts for land tax out of a cheque receipt book. He argued, amongst other difficulties which he made, that that was no protection as he might enter a different sum in the cheque to what he did in the body True enough, but that could hereafter be better brought home to him than if he had put the money in his pocket and made no record of it in his books. At any rate the land tax became more productive, and we have since had no more people's land sold by mistake for arrears of taxes which they had paid. I can think of no other way applicable to some of these cases except something similar, except in the case of land agents which I will mention presently. Perhaps the cases of this kind arise so seldom, most receipts being direct [from] the public chest except land agents, Customs collectors and collectors of tolls on the canals.

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[*] The Rev. Egerton Ryerson (1803-1882), superintendent of education in Canada West.

Lastly the cash balances should have vouchers, which they never have—that is, to say where is [the] money? If in the man's pocket we must take his word for it and should know it at any rate, but if where it ought to be, in a bank, we should be told how deposited and get a bank certificate from him or a return from the bank. Last week I partially audited our superintendent of education's accounts. The whole sum passing through his hands annually is about £60,000, the great bulk of which, about £45,000, is received by him in January and July, and almost immediately paid out; nevertheless on January 1st, 1854, he had according to me, though much disguised in his accounts, upwards of £13,000 in hand, and January 1st, 1855, upwards of £9,000. Where is the money? It never seems to have occurred to anybody to ask. It may be spent or it may be at interest on his behalf. I had just come to this conclusion (I mean that he had these balances) when an application from him was sent down to me to report upon in which he says that, in consequence of my having required him to send in his accounts quarterly, it would be much more convenient if instead of getting all his appropriations annually, about July or August, he were to have them paid him quarterly in advance. In my report which I made last night I shew that under

the nine heads into which he divides his accounts and asks for his money quarterly in advance, in all of them he has had in hand constantly for a year and a half a much larger balance than the advance he asks for. In 1853 he got his £3,000 for 1854 on account of school libraries in advance, but January 1, 1855, fully £2,000 of it was still on hand. In the same year a grant was made of £500 a year towards a museum and he got his money for 1854 in advance, but January 1st, 1855, out of two annual payments he had only succeeded in expending £75. I think that man's cash balances want looking after. He is the Pope of Methodism in this country, but he mistook his profession. Nature intended him for a Jesuit.

This leads me to another question. If there is anything wrong in an account, of course I report; if there is anything bad in the system of keeping accounts I think it is clear I should report also. But when the system of managing the public business is bad, is that any concern of mine? I doubt. The question of large balances is in the debatable ground between the last two named questions, and that I have reported upon in the education case and in the opposite case of the Lunatic Asylum. This institution expends about £10,000 of public money, receiving about £500 from paying patients and other services, and renders accounts quarterly, carefully analysing the expenditure, quite a model in that respect for our public accountants. They go on tick for everything except the small sum they get from paying patients, their quarterly accounts being a list of their debts, which they get a warrant to discharge; but the last quarter as they showed a balance of cash in hand £89, Dickenson, being zealous as a new hand, deducted this from their liabilities, and they got a warrant only for the net balance. This large and admirably managed institution has therefore been carried on now for three months without a single sixpence of cash except from some paying patient who may have been discharged during the middle of the quarter, for they only make their payments quarterly. This will be amended for the future. It is much more questionable whether I should not be considered as going beyond my province if I were to report upon other questions of general finance, and yet I long to do so. We are eaten up with special funds which are daily increasing. Egerton Ryerson in his Education accounts must have nine special funds, and always keeps a heavy balance in each; as if I kept a baker's, butcher's, tailor's, etc., fund, with always enough in it to meet any possible demand during the year. He only follows the example of his betters. We are a mass of special funds, and the consequence is that like Ryerson we have always a large balance on hand. With an annual revenue of about £1,500,000, the smallest of our monthly cash balances last year was £600,000 and the average about £850,000; and this does not include everything, for some of the special funds are not kept in the Receiver General's name, and, until Cayley altered it this year, some departments, as the Crown Lands, kept a separate purse and only paid over to the Receiver General when they had a large sum, such as £30,000 or £40,000 in the instance of the Crown Lands. I must watch an opportunity of reporting it as a matter of account.

I am only just beginning to see my way into the way the different departments keep their books. There has been a great improvement of late years, in a great

measure owing to Hincks,* but there is still room for improvement. The Inspector General's Department is the most perfect but even there I find a curious want. Before the union it seems no accounts were kept with collectors of Revenue but their monthly returns were filed away in pigeon holes where they still repose. It was a great improvement when Hincks opened a sub-accountants ledger for these gentlemen who receive money for the public, but it does appear to me curious that to this day they have never thought of opening a ledger for the gentlemen who expend the public money. With such people as my friend Ryerson the pigeon hole system is still carried out Whatever the Inspector General may do I mean to open a ledger for these sub-accountants with the new year.

But the two great departments I have to deal with are the Crown Lands and the Public Works—the one, after the customs, our principal source of revenue and the other its great consumer. As to the first, till three years ago they did not keep books on any system at all, but now they keep them by double entry and well, as far as the remains of the old system and half a dozen irresponsible Lower Canadian special funds will allow, and a villainous system they have of distinct branches of the department. If you enquire about any unintelligible entry the book-keeper can only tell you it was so returned to me but Mr. Spragge or Mr. Dawson or Mr. Langevin has charge of that branch These different branches audit or do not audit themselves and only report totals The whole department audits or does not audit itself and used as I told you to keep a separate purse. Even now they do not pay in the gross revenue and get warrants for their expenses, but they hand over only the balance after paying their expenses in many cases. The consequence is that the Chief Commission may order surveys, add a new Department of Mines or what not to give a friend a berth or give a pension to a clerk's widow, not only without authority of Parliament but without consulting his brother ministers. It is checked by the new regulation but not stopped. It may give you an idea how carelessly things were managed to give you an instance. In former days when land was a drug it was freely given away. United Empire Loyalists and their children born and to be born were entitled to grants of land, Militia men after the war, etc., etc. About fifteen years ago this was stopped, and land scrip, for £5 each, was issued to all claimants at so much an acre on their claim, as a legal tender in payment of land at its current rate. The whole country was flooded with it, it was at a great discount and for many years it almost annihilated the land revenue. Now it appears upon examining the gross results that, notwithstanding much outstanding scrip, more has already been redeemed than ever was issued. When scrip came in in payment it never was checked with the scrip book, much of it was never defaced in any way and none in any effectual way, and none of it destroyed. I am hunting it up from its recesses and vaults of banks where it has been deposited and forgotten for years, and I think we have it all. I have commenced checking it, which will be a tedious business and require my constant supervision. I find that at one time the practice was for the commissioner to sign a whole scrip book at once in blank, to the value of £10,000, and leave the clerks to fill them up afterwards. All I can say is that if I find all right they must be honester people in the Crown Lands than I ever gave them credit for. Another horrible mismanagement is the Crown Land agents scattered through the Province, through whom all lands are sold and whose receipts are binding on the department. They have to make monthly returns and payments, but many of them are always in arrear. Now an agent sells a quantity of land, receives the money and reports what he has done, remitting the money; or not reporting or remitting as the case may be. But suppose he does report and remit but not all his sales. The department knows nothing about it and has no means of knowing. Clergy reserves are sold on ten years credit. A man may have paid his instalments regularly though the agent may not have returned them, and it will first be found out when ten years have elapsed and he presents his ten receipts and claims his deed. Now I know some of these men to be great rogues and who shall say to what extent this has been carried. I am inclined to think the whole system of local agents should be done away with, but that is none of my business. I have the power to send a man to inspect their books if they have any and I think I shall do it, but I don't know that much would come of it. The great cure for the future, (but that would leave their land jobbing and favoritism untouched), would be to let them finger no cash. Wherever there is a land agency there is a bank agency not far off. The purchaser should pay his money into the bank, taking duplicate bank certificates which he would give the agent, one for the Receiver General and one for the Crown Lands Department.

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* Sir Francis Hincks (1807-1885), who had been inspector general of public accounts from 1842 to 1843 and from 1848 to 1851, and prime minister from 1851 to 1854 In 1855 he was appointed governor of Barbadoes and the Windward Islands.

The Board of Works however is the Augean stable which I most dread. Their accounts have never been audited since 1851 and then only partially. They say one whole case containing vouchers was lost on the removal of the seat of government They have never balanced their books since 1852. They tried last year but after a month's work failed. Of the nature of their vouchers I have before spoken, and of their reluctance to let me go into arrears. Before I make up my mind about the latter I must see my way through this year. But enough of my troubles for one letter.

Yours, etc.,

JOHN LANGTON

TO HIS BROTHER, WILLIAM LANGTON

Toronto, Feb. 24th, 1856

MY DEAR WILLIAM,

Since I wrote to you last I naturally know much more of my position and the sort of work before me than I did and your answer to my former letter which I have just received induces me to go on with the same subject I find Cayley a pleasant man to work with, upon the principle that a silent man is a most agreeable companion to a great talker. He lets me do whatever I like, and if he does not very much assist me at any rate throws no impediments in my way. I have engaged my head man Mr. Cruse, of whom I have an excellent character, but although his engagement commenced on the 17th of January I have had no personal opportunity of judging him. I was very deficient in office room at the time and I lent him to Dickenson and have never been able to get him back. In some respects this is a nuisance as I had expected him to relieve me of much of the head work, in which I get no assistance from the others and which is almost more than I can manage with sitting up to all hours in the morning. Whilst in the office I can get nothing done. During office hours I am interrupted every moment by somebody and I generally find that I do more real work in the hour and a half I stay after the clerks are gone than in all the rest of the day, but I cannot keep my share of the work up to the rest without taking work home with me. However there is some advantage in Cruse being where he is. He is hastening the closing of the public accounts, which I have to audit when made up, and he is in the meantime getting acquainted with the system in the Inspector General's office, which will be of use to us hereafter. The rest are all temporary. [One] at £300 a year is almost useless to me, but I have got him at a job at present unconnected with financial business (for I cannot trust him with figures), more of a statistical character, which with other literary portions of the business he does pretty well, though a fearful nuisance from his constant interruptions to me in telling me what he has done or consulting what he is to do. I hope to get rid of him soon. If I do, I mean to have Mr. Cambie as second clerk at £250 to keep up the general business of the office not directly connected with the auditing, of which we have a good deal; as receiving reports from various institutions, countersigning and keeping a record of the notes issued by banks under the Free Banking Act and of the securities deposited by them with the Receiver General, and various other miscellaneous business which is handed over to us. Third, Mr. Greene whom I found here, very steady and constant and very accurate in figures but with very few ideas beyond figures, fourth and fifth Messrs. Barber and Patterson, two young lads I brought in, both very steady and willing and Barber with some head. I am training him to abstract and analyse and draw up general statements from confused details, and he promises very well though it is no present aid to me as I have to take as much or more trouble in teaching him and checking him than would enable me to do the work myself. However it will I hope be a relief hereafter. [The sixth] I mean to get rid of, and I think the five will be my permanent staff as I can always get temporary assistance, but I may have to add a sixth. My system is when any accounts come in to look cursorily over them myself first to see whether there is any peculiar feature which requires any special instructions beyond the general ones the clerks already have, and then I hand them over to one of them to audit. Each clerk has a book in which he enters all the remarks he finds to make, or rather two books one of which he is working with and one which I am using. When he has finished I take his book and his accounts and give him the other book and fresh work. I then go over his remarks myself, and always verify his observations before acting upon them. If he is one in whose accuracy I have confidence I generally confine myself to what he has never worked upon assuming the rest to be correct; but I often have to look over other parts, especially if large sums are concerned or there is a fault of system in the particular account, and I often find they have passed over what should have been remarked upon. On the blank side of their book I make my own observations, and when I have finished one man's account I write to him with my strictures and ask for his explanations. When I have everything as far rectified as I can, I report if necessary to the Inspector General and I give the account to Mr. Barber, as corrected, to arrange and analyse if it requires it and to enter into a statement book. Many of the accounts give rise to statements and tables of another character, more in the nature of statistics, which are entered in another book, keeping the former one merely for statements of account. They are entered miscellaneously just as we make them up and are very various in their character, some of them expansions of single items in others, and relating to various periods of time. This is all I have attempted for the past and I only intend to commence my ledger from the beginning of this year. It is an improvement upon the pigeon-hole system of former days where there were stowed away, people hardly knew where, piles of accounts, some accounts current without vouchers, some vouchers without accounts, some the driest of abstracts and others a mass of confused entries of which you could only say that the totals shew a certain amount received and another expended. The accounts are at any rate all together and can be referred to by an index, and they are so analysed as to show at a glance their leading features. I don't know that I could have made much more out of past transactions but for the future I mean to have a regular ledger and I think I may probably have to keep also a statement book subsidiary to it and explanatory of the separate items of which some of the ledger accounts will be composed, otherwise the ledger itself would become too bulky and confused a business. Thus the Board of Works would be an account in the ledger. But they have at present upwards of thirty different appropriations for different works, besides more than that number of kinds of expenditure not under any distinct appropriation but which they claim the right of spending upon under their general Act. All these would form properly separate accounts in their ledger but not in mine I think, and yet one must be able to see how these stand. The Board of Works would I think be my only account, its separate works being only items in it, whilst the details of these items properly analysed would appear in the general statement book or perhaps in this case in a separate book for that department alone. I have had to open another book elucidating this same Board of Works. There are existing contracts on many of the works running over several years before they are finally closed; in some cases the contractors getting advances, and at other times having a drawback kept from them, so that I cannot keep track of these contracts without opening an account for the several contractors. The same remark applies to their superintendents who have frequently balances in hand and at other times seem to be out of pocket. I have therefore opened a subsidiary book for the Board of Works contractors and agents. What I may have to do of a similar character with other departments I hardly know yet. I must obviously keep a record of open accounts in some way. In some cases I have merely entered in the statement book the list of open balances connected with a certain account, as "Statement of the balances of the appropriations to the several grammar schools in Upper Canada for the year 1855 which remained unpaid on 1st Jan., 1856." But where the open accounts are of a more complicated character each may require to be stated separately and that would encumber the statement book and a separate book may have to be opened as for the Board of Works contractors, the abstract of which properly arranged would make a proper account for the statement book. All this makes a great deal of book keeping, but when we get rid of arrears and all square up to the current time I think we may keep it so. Hitherto as I told you before whilst they have kept a ledger for the people collecting money they have had none for those spending it, except in the case ✓ of departments of government; and then they appear to me to have got into some confusion by mixing up in one account two essentially different things—viz., the money placed at their disposal and how much has been paid to them of it, and the money which they have received and how they have expended it. I do not see my way quite clearly, but I cannot devise any way of keeping a record of these two things in one account without confusion. I think there should be two distinct ledgers, or two accounts for each accountant in one ledger, showing the state of the appropriation and the state of the expenditure; the former way would be best for the future I think, but the latter is the one I have adopted in my present statement book. This is more essentially necessary where there are other receipts besides the appropriations; and where these receipts form a leading feature of the account I question whether there should not be a separate revenue account. Thus the Board of Works would have, 1st their appropriation account, 2nd their revenue and maintenance account, if they are allowed to deduct from the revenue the expense of keeping the work up, but much better a revenue account balanced by their payments to the Receiver General, 3rdly maintenance and repairs of public works either to be paid from time to time by order in council out of the revenue or at once from the consolidated fund into which the revenue would go. The revenue should not be kept as a special fund applicable to the maintenance, according to our besetting sin of special funds, but the revenue should go into the common purse and the repairs etc., out of it; whilst the revenue and the maintenance accounts would always afford the materials of a statement, which would not be a ledger account, of how much the revenue from each work exceeded or fell short of the expense of keeping it up and how these two things compared with each other on the aggregate of all the works. And here would come a difficulty in deciding what was a repair and what a new work. If funds are short the Board is rather apt to shroud the non-paying character of a work by getting repairs done under the guise of a new work. If they are plentiful they will spend largely on improvements, without the disagreeable ordeal of the House of Assembly, by very extensive repairs out of revenue. 4th Expenditure under special appropriations by Parliament and, perhaps distinct from this, 5th Expenditure of a casual and unprovided kind under Order in Council (much too large an account), and 6th Expenditure under the general powers of their Act not by Order in Council (a very much too large and ill defined account). All these things it would be very desirable to see stated separately, though I am not at all clear that they should be separate accounts in the ledger. What I do see my way the clearest in is that there should be a separate ledger for appropriations, but this is not without its difficulties. When a special sum is appropriated either in the annual estimates or in some special Act or in a general Act appropriating an annual sum, there would be no difficulty in opening an account in the ledger with each appropriation, against which the warrants would be charged as they issue; and I have pressed Cayley to introduce the rule recommended in England by the Committee on Public Accounts, but I cannot trace whether acted upon, that any balance of an appropriation unexpended after a certain time should die a natural death. Our books are encumbered with such unexpended small balances which are forgotten till it is desirable to hunt them up to cover some expenditure which will not exactly bear the light of day. When I was in Parliament I wanted to get a man paid some small sum clearly owing to him for many years, but Hincks would not put it in the estimates. Richards* however the then Attorney General put me up to the approved method, and together we found an old appropriation before the union of the provinces on which we contrived to make my friend chargeable. I am afraid worse cases than mine have gone through the same process. This however is a digression. Then any Order in Council would have to come into the same ledger, not as a separate account for each order which would be too cumbersome, especially as it is generally immediately balanced by a warrant for the same amount, but for each service to which the orders in council were applicable. This I think would be better than entering the Orders in Council in the same account as the Parliamentary appropriations for the same service. So far I see my way clearly, the only thing wanted being that I should be furnished with a memorandum of each Order in Council authorizing the expenditure of money as it is passed. The great difficulty is with the general Acts. There must be general Acts authorizing money to be expended for certain purposes, as the administration of justice, the exact amount of which cannot be known beforehand. In such cases it has been usual to issue warrants without any order in council. Whether such payments should not appear in the ledger at all, which would be unsatisfactory as it ought to shew all expenditure; or whether Orders in Council should not be required which would be difficult to manage; or whether I should simply balance the account for each service when I know what it comes to by an entry of "authorized by Act so and so", I have not yet determined. To require orders in council for each separate payment would be excessively inconvenient, to require an order in council for a definite amount on account to be renewed as wanted, so as to keep before the Council from time to time the state of the expenditure, would be better; but the present system at any rate appears very imperfect, for without Parliament or even the Council knowing anything about it, it gives the Inspector General and in practice the Deputy Inspector General power to spend money of which no one can tell till long after it is spent whether it was really chargeable under the general Act. The Board of Works for instance, under its general Act, has charge of all public buildings, etc., and incurs all sorts of miscellaneous expenditure and gets warrants to meet it, without the matter ever coming up before Council. It no doubt renders an account afterwards, of which there are boxes full which have never been audited and passed, though the late Deputy Inspector General says they were all examined, which I very much doubt, and no doubt also the substance of these accounts is published annually in the printed pubhe accounts in great lump items the title of which gives very little clue to their component parts. This is my difficulty with the appropriation ledger. It is true that an appropriation book has for some years past been kept which is in fact a sort of ledger of the kind, though taking no note of orders in council and general Acts or indeed permanent Acts authorizing an annual fixed expenditure. It contains only the yearly appropriations on one side, and the warrants as they issue are entered on the other, and no balances of previous years' appropriations are carried into the new book. But if the present appropriation book were improved in this respect, still it might lead to very fallacious results unless in some way brought *en rapport* with the expenditure ledger. The two things are so far distinct that they should be kept in separate books or in separate accounts in the same book, but they are so far connected that they must be taken together to give a clear idea of how any account stands. An instance of this occurred only the other day in the case of the Superintendent of Education East.* He and his brother of the West are perfect contrasts. My Jesuitical friend Ryerson has got the genius of order and system. His accounts and vouchers are a model for all our public departments. As he has been accustomed to render them they convey the smallest amount of detailed information, but when asked for, the minutest details were forthcoming in a moment. Even when I asked for a voucher for his balance in hand I got a certificate the next morning from the cashier that £17,000 was lying to his credit in the Bank of Upper Canada in his own name and about £7,000 more in his name of office. He draws his appropriations with the most beautiful regularity, the misfortune is that he does not spend them. The man in the East on the contrary is an honest but very thick-headed individual who renders his accounts in such detail that you can hardly understand them, and never touched a penny of public money in his life. He draws out cheques from time to time, as he ascertains what sums he has to pay, and every month or two when they amount to a sufficient sum he issues them and gets a warrant for the exact amount. Some time ago he overdrew his account and, as he had at the time some £30,000 unaccounted for, a clerk was sent down to overhaul his books, when it appeared that with the exception of a quantity of loose papers and the talons of the cheques there was very little in the shape of books to overhaul The clerk got an inkling of how affairs really stood, but it was never clearly made out till I disentangled it the other day. Besides the permanent educational grant to Upper and Lower Canada we have been in the habit of granting annual[ly] an additional sum, varying from £10,000 to £25,000, and the honest man seeing this and forgetting the existence of Upper Canada thought the whole of it belonged to him and squared his expenses accordingly, believing himself to be keeping within a very wide margin indeed of his income and annually reporting an unexpended balance which we annually voted away in aid [of] building schoolhouses and supporting colleges, etc.; whereas he has been annually expending £4,000 a year beyond his income, after our deductions. This was not felt at first because the apportionment to schools for the last half of 1855 is never paid until 1856, according to their system, and some portions often not for two years, he having to wait till the parishes have made an equivalent appropriation which, the Lower Canadians not being a tax-loving people, they are very slow to do. It thus happened that it was not till his overexpenditure on his appropriations exceeded a half year's income that he ever actually overdrew his account and so attracted the attention of government to the matter. It is true that in the pigeon holes lay his accounts of the sums he had paid to various parishes in driblets, payments on account of 1853, 54, and 55 all mixed up together and with the funniest of vouchers, and all I have not the slightest doubt absolutely correct, but as long as he did not absolutely overdraw his account nobody perceived that he was paying his 1854 expenses with his 1855 income at the same moment that we were voting away an imaginary unexpended balance of 1854. This is a long story and I have been specially amused with it because the other day, on the very evening when I had made a report to Cayley upon the subject, I took my ladies to the House where they heard a very hot debate as to what was the proper way of spending the unexpended balance of the Lower Canada School Fund. The moral of the story is this that it is not enough to know whether a man has drawn what he is entitled to on the one hand, or whether he has spent what he has drawn on the other, but whether he has spent it for the purpose for which he was entitled to draw it.

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*The Hon (afterwards Sir) William Buell Richards (1815-1889), member for Leeds in the Legislative Assembly, and attorney-general in the Hincks-Morin ministry from 1851 to 1853, when he was appointed to a puisne judgeship in the Court of Common Pleas for Upper Canada.

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* The Hon. Pierre Joseph Olivier Chauveau (1820-1890), who became superintendent of education in Canada East after the session of 1854-55, succeeding Dr. Jean Baptiste Meilleur (1796-1878).

You will perceive that I have only spoken in detail of two or three accounts. In fact I have only spoken of difficulties which I know, and I do not know how many more are in store for me. I have seen no Post

Office accounts, though the Postmaster General* tells me that about March he thinks I shall have the first half of last year and that it will keep me busy for a couple of months. I have seen no Crown Land accounts, respecting the nature of which I am absolutely in the dark; and I have seen no Inspector General's accounts and Dickenson tells me I shall hardly do so till they are in the printer's hands.

I am ashamed of the length of this letter and must try to close it in this half sheet. I am conscious I am likely to be a very obnoxious individual and I have no doubt Egerton Ryerson will bate me cordially. I must bear it as best I may. I will try not to become impracticable as you say, and I don't think I am very, but it is difficult sometimes to draw the line.

Yours etc.,

JOHN LANGTON

TO HIS BROTHER, WM. LANGTON

Toronto, April 17, 1856

MY DEAR WILLIAM,

I must give you another yarn about the public accounts, being a subject about which for want of any more agreeable one I think of all day and dream of most of the night. I expected to find a mess but the reality exceeded my expectations, especially as I have only yet got into the threshold of the dirtiest stall in the Augean stable—the Board of Works. I know that in that department accounts have been balanced by charges to contingencies to a great extent. I have no official knowledge of it yet and [it] may be some time

before I have, because I can't get the accounts and the utmost costiveness prevails with regard to information. The sudden death of their bookkeeper last night will no doubt be made the excuse for more delay. Probably the impossibility of getting the books balanced had something to do with it, for he died the death of Lord Mountcoffeehouse the Irish peer. With the Crown Lands I am also at present at a standstill, except that I discovered the other day forgeries of land scrip to the extent of £6,000. I know who did it pretty well but I cannot find any clue to his confederates, and if I could bring it home to him, which is perhaps doubtful, he cleared out to the States two years ago and is beyond my reach. I am at present on the scent of game in another direction, and although there is a sort of sameness in the occupation there is also variety and some excitement. I must give you two specimens, one of which you have heard of before.

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* The Hon. Robert Spence (1811-1868), postmaster-general from 1854 to 1858

We are a very wealthy people. We raise a large amount of revenue from a very moderate customs tariff and we hardly know how to spend it. I think we shall be relieved in this respect for the future because our railway speculations have provided a very efficient issue which will prevent us dying of plethora. It is astonishing how coolly we all bore the news that interest on debt to the amount of £300,000 a year which we had only guaranteed and never expected to pay is, by the repudiation of the Grand Trunk and other companies, to be met for the future by us. This however by the bye. Amongst the other consequences of our excess of revenue we always kept some half million idle in the banks. With an income of not much more than a million and a half in 1854 we never had less than £600,000 and sometimes upwards of £800,000 so lying.

In 1855 the diminished imports and increased expenses had somewhat relieved this determination of blood to the banks, but still we generally had from 3 to 4 or £500,000 unemployed and the balances were duly reported to the Governor General every evening. Some of this was at three per cent. interest, subject to two or three months' notice, in various banks, but the bulk was at call in the Bank of Upper Canada which is our financial agent, and great is the outcry against this favoured institution in consequence. I had a call from the cashier the other day who complained that whilst they were supposed to have more than £200,000 in their hands they were really put to great inconvenience in their general business by being in advance to government about £50,000 and he wanted me to speak to the Inspector General about it, who he did not believe knew how things really stood. I must say I was taken aback, but I immediately commenced investigations and I found that a practice has long existed than which nothing can be worse and which renders these balances in hand sent in to the Governor General every evening so much waste paper. At the end of every month the resident engineer gives each contractor what is called a monthly estimate showing what work he has done, how much is to be kept as drawback and what he may get payment for. He takes this to the bank who give him the money. They send it to the Board of Works who after examining and checking, etc., issue a certificate to the bank. This certificate they send to the Council office who at their leisure prepare a warrant which is sent to the Inspector General, and it is not till he signs the warrant that he knows anything about it. In the ordinary course it is at least a month after the money has been paid before it comes into the public accounts; and if a particular expenditure is of a nature which it is not desired to make known, especially whilst Parliament is in session or the public accounts are being made up for the year, there is nothing more easy than to keep it back a little in some of its numerous stages. After the warrant does come in it may be found all wrong, paid once before, unauthorized, etc., of all of which there are instances now in the office. Delay occurs in consequence and the disagreeable item does not appear in the published accounts, but the money is nevertheless really spent and irrecoverable The bank advances to the Board of Works at this present moment are something like £100,000

Then there is the Post Office. It is not a paying concern with us but a constant source of expense, as we have innumerable post offices scattered over the country the receipts from which do not pay a fiftieth part of the cost of conveying the mail I don't object to that if we knew what it cost us, but we do not. Last session £20,000 was voted to cover the deficiencies of 1854 and 55, at which time we had the Postmaster General's report that the deficiency for 1854 was £7,000 odd I question very much if three members in the House knew (I did not) that the Postmaster General's financial year ends on the 31st of March and that when he told us in May, 1855 that he was deficient £7,000 for 1854 he meant up to March, 1854. What he was deficient up to March, 1855, two months after the year was over, he knew no more than we did; but he supposed the other £13,000 would cover it. There is the greatest trouble in getting returns from postmasters, whose emoluments are so small that you have no hold upon them on that score; and I have up to the present time only got the accounts to June of last year, and not three weeks ago the end of the year ending March 31, 1855. Up to that time I now know that the deficiency was £29,000, to meet which there was only £13,000; and since then a whole year has elapsed, with the expenses of carrying the mail daily increasing both from the general rise of everything and the increased number of non-paying offices. The Postmaster General has not the smallest idea what the deficiency will be in the year just past, but the bank which has been finding the ways and means all the time has a very good idea, it is £57,000. These are goodly sums to be expended, not only without sanction of Parliament but without the consent or even knowledge of the finance minister.

The Crown Lands also have a good pull at purse, and there is another case of which I had some cognizance which illustrates the impropriety of this system. Last year we had a new Militia Bill in consequence of your taking away all our soldiers, but Parliament with the jealousy which always characterizes popular assemblies grumbled at the bill and especially the expense and put in a clause saying that the payment must depend upon an annual vote of Parliament, and the Ministry very glad to escape from an unpopular measure accepted the clause and said that as they did not intend to organize they would not ask for a vote that year. Nevertheless they did partially organize, and the pay lists came in to me for audit; or rather the Deputy Inspector General asked me before payment what was to be done. I pointed out that it was not only an unprovided expense, but that the Act positively prohibited any thing being paid till a vote had been taken. So they privately instructed the bank to make an advance.

You can now understand how our apparent balances dwindle away. I have declared open war against the system and Cayley gives me a lukewarm support, but he is too timid a hand for any efficient reform. The Board of Works declare reform impossible, the Postmaster General declares it impossible, and the only warm support I get is from the bank and from the Receiver General who being the cash keeper has a commendable objection to allow any extraneous fingers to get into his purse. Nevertheless I will conquer. There is a Committee of the House on Public Accounts the chairman * of which is a fine upright fellow, a wealthy merchant and a great friend of mine. I have told him all about it and, although a leader of opposition, he has agreed that I am to do my best to get the Ministry to make the reform, and if I can't do that then we will bring it out before the Committee. It is a very difficult position for me. I don't like anything that can be construed into treachery to the men in office but I can't conceal anything I know to be so grievously wrong. John Young the aforesaid chairman sent for me and told me that he believed both of us mainly desired, politics apart, to put the financial business on a proper footing. That he felt in entire ignorance of the nature of the business in the financial offices and did not know where to begin. He said that he would put me such general questions as would enable me to tell where was a field for research, and he did. I might to be sure have answered them truly and yet have left him in the dark, but although it looked like volunteering information

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* John Young (1811-1878), a prominent merchant of Montreal, who had been elected member of the Legislative Assembly for Montreal City in November, 1851. He had been commissioner of public works in the Hincks-Morin government from October, 1851 to September, 1852.

I thought it the better course to be very open. In a private conversation I told him afterwards a great deal more, upon which he agreed to leave me to work by myself first and if that failed he will back me. It is their own fault making it a dependent office. I should have had the power of independent reporting and I always told them so, and they knew that I would not assist to conceal anything. Nevertheless I was not easy in my mind so I told John Macdonald what I had done the other day and he acknowledged that I was right. It will end in giving me the power of independent reporting, but I should not be surprised if there was a row first. I may also mention that the bank being desirous of making a poor mouth, as the saying is, overstated the case and, if closely enquired into, I do not think they are really in advance to Government at all. The advances to contractors in strictness are and certainly ought to be pure banking transactions. I ✓have little doubt that the bank get a discount on their advance when it would clearly not be government they were paying. It is a business which any bank would be glad to get for the security is good, and the presumptive evidence that the contractor is entitled to draw much clearer than in most cases where a bank discounts a draft; besides it is exactly the sort of business they like, for their notes are paid away to labourers and small tradesmen and are much longer in coming back upon them than if they assisted a merchant to make a large payment. Moreover £11,000 of the ✓post office advance appears to be money not really paid but credits given to money order post offices, so that that sum is really never out of their hands though fluctuating about amongst their different branches and agencies ✓Then all public accountants keep their

money in the bank, or ought to do, and the £23,000 which Ryerson holds, though paid by the bank to Government, is still really in their hands. This does not however affect the main question I have to deal with.

The second subject is the old story of Ryerson. I took occasion to ask at the bank whether they allowed him interest, and they do at three per cent. and I got a statement of the amounts so paid him since 1851; when therefore the Dr returned from England the day before yesterday he found a pleasant note from me calling upon him to account for nearly £1,600 had and received for the public uses of the province, not a very pleasant reception for a man of such intense respectability. I have no answer as yet but I have no doubt, from his great efficiency as school superintendent and the great power of the Methodist connection, I shall be accused of a conspiracy to upset our school system, etc., etc. The great father of lies himself is not up to more cunning dodges than my reverend friend, and the way in which he has kept his account was evidently intended to meet the possibility of such a charge. It has been under several different names, sometimes two or three at once and balances transferred from one to the other, but all of them under some official designation as Superintendent of Education, Legislative School Grant, Board of Education, etc. This at once removes any doubts as to the interest being public money, and he will not I think attempt to deny it, but triumphantly point to the title of the account to shew that he never intended it to be otherwise. How he will explain why he never rendered any account of these sums being in his hands is another thing, but from long acquaintance with the man I have no doubt he has an answer ready. What makes it susceptible of being construed into part of an attack upon the school system is a further complication which I will try to explain. When they were making out the annual accounts, the education fund being in great confusion I made out a statement and got them to close the books accordingly, showing a balance overdrawn by Lower Canada of £5,825 and a balance still available for Upper Canada of £300 odd, relying altogether upon the balances January 1st, 1855, being correct. When I got the proof sheets of the Public Accounts, which I had never seen until then, I found a payment for increased salaries, which I had never heard of before, charged to Consolidated Revenue whereas by the Order in Council it was to be charged to Education Fund, which brought out a balance against Upper Canada of £179. 13. 4, which I got accordingly altered; and as I was then drawing up a statement for the House of Assembly, I based it upon this second rectification of the school account. I may say by the way that I purposely drew up the statement in such a way as to shew that Lower Canada had been constantly overdrawing and Upper Canada underexpending, and it does not say much for our financiers that nobody perceived it. The only remark upon Ryerson's balances was an attack upon Government from Mackenzie for making Ryerson draw these sums to deposit in the pet bank, as if it was any advantage to them to pay him interest instead of paying Government none. As for Lower Canada, both Ministers and the Opposition are firmly and unalterably persuaded that there are large unexpended balances, and in spite of my statement and numerous further details which I have given individual members they have just passed a new school Act, which proceeds upon the assumption of about £6,000 a year unclaimed balances whilst the superintendent has really been overexpending about £2,000 a year There used to be large unclaimed balances, but schools have been more popular in Lower Canada of late and the real object of the Bill is to starve the common schools in order to build up the higher class of educational institutions which are under the control of the priests. Cartier, the Minister who introduced the bill, can plead no ignorance and did not deny his knowledge of the truth to me and scarcely denied his object, so the question having become one of policy and not of accounts is removed from my jurisdiction. He said in so many words that it sounded better to call them unclaimed balances, but whether unclaimed or not he had provided that the money should come out of the common school fund. Honest that at any rate However to return to Egerton Ryerson. If the House took no notice of my statement Mr. Hodgins the Deputy Superintendent of Education did . . . Mr. Hodgins wrote me a very indignant letter for saying that they were £179 overdrawn and showing that the error arose from my giving them credit for the half only of an additional grant of £25,000 in 1855 instead of their share according to population, the principle followed in dividing the original £50,000 a year, and which had been followed with respect to additional grants also since 1853 when they first commenced. Now I had before me when I made the statement Ryerson's application for the larger share and the report thereon of the Inspector General and Deputy Inspector General both saying that former additional grants had been equally divided, and the Order in Council affirming the same fact (orders in council should not affirm facts), and deciding that the same course must continue to be followed. This was enough for me, but Mr. Hodgins' letter induced me to go back and I found the astounding fact that, although £10,000 had been so granted in 1853 and paid, there was not in any book in the Inspector General's Department or in the published public accounts the faintest record of how much of it had been paid to Dr. Ryerson and how much to Dr. Meilleur.* It is true that I found another £5,000 which had nothing to do with the matter but which had apparently from an erroneous reference in the margin been taken for Dr. Meilleur's half of the £10,000, but the history of the £10,000 itself was a blank. I had therefore to look to the accounts of the superintendents themselves and I found that Ryerson had accounted for his division of the larger share and Dr. Meilleur for his of the smaller, so that Hodgins was right in point of fact and the Order in Council wrong. I satisfied myself that the Hincks government had intended the £10,000 to be a regular annual addition to the grant, to be divided like the rest, and upon the strength of this Ryerson had prepared and Hincks had carried an amended school Act providing for the manner in which it was to be expended (it has not by the bye been so expended in any one particular). In my researches, however, I came upon another astounding fact, that Ryerson according to his custom of drawing in advance had again received his share early in 1854, apparently under his Act although that did not grant the money but only showed how what might be granted should be expended; and when the new Government made the additional grant for 1854 £15,000 instead of £10,000, he also claimed and got his share of the £15,000 under the estimates. As for the Lower Canada man, his accounts had got into such hopeless confusion that a clerk, was sent down who commencing at 1848 reconstructed them and gave him credit for his half of the three additional grants of 1853, 4, and 5. I had therefore to correct my statement a third time showing that, on the supposition of an equal division, whilst Lower Canada had overdrawn £5,825, Upper Canada had overdrawn £5,631, and the two sums were so near each other that I recommended taking a sponge to the whole transaction and starting afresh. This was I think not an unreasonable proposition but it brought down upon me Mr. Hodgins again, with greater indignation than before, with a statement beginning in 1846 showing that he had only overdrawn £2,400 odd. It is true that a couple of days after he asked to withdraw the statement and put in a new one acknowledging to £4,690, but it is curious that an acute man should not have perceived that all this was not *instead of* but *in addition to* the sum I had named. I in the meantime went back to 1846 also and, lest I might have to make a fifth correction, I satisfied myself that in 1844 and 45 he had just got his appropriation and indeed 11d short of it; so I think I have got a firm foothold at last, and I make him £12,900 overdrawn. This balance may be thus analysed in round numbers, £4,700 which he acknowledges to be really overdrawn, £6,200 which he acknowledges to have received but claims a right to, and £2,000 which the Public Accounts show were paid him but he does not charge himself with. I therefore have called upon Ryerson to account for this also and shall send a clerk to examine the books. Irrespective of the Dr., however, what are we to do with the accounts as between Upper and Lower Canada? We may take a sponge to the whole thing and begin again, which would be the best thing, but I doubt whether Lower Canada will stand our having received £7,000 more than they. Or we may make both pay, up, or make Upper Canada pay the difference or Lower Canada receive the difference, or make Upper Canada pay to Lower Canada half the difference. Any of the last methods would be very unpopular in Upper Canada, for we are very proud and justly proud of our schools upon which besides the government grant we spend nearly £300,000 a year from municipal taxation, and parting with any of Ryerson's balances, especially to Lower Canada, would go very much against the grain. We shall not grumble at Ryerson grasping more than his due for so good a purpose and as no doubt this year the savings will be largely poured out the schools will be more popular than ever. I have no doubt that Ryerson will mix up the two things and lose sight of his own irregularity in defending his school fund from the plunder which I instigate, and it is not consolatory to think that the public, when it comes before them, not having the fear of arithmetic before their eyes will care nothing for my figures, but only think of protecting the Upper Canada school moneys from diminution or object to any additional grant to Lower Canada to go into the hands of the priests, a feeling in which I most cordially participate. I should not be at all surprised if Ryerson comes out of the contest with flying colours, and honoured as a great public benefactor. He is undoubtedly a very clever fellow and a very deep one. For years past he has worked the schools till he has centered all power in himself, each new bill lopping off some of the municipal or other extraneous control, and he has latterly made a great push to get the colleges and university under his thumb. He has a journal of education as his organ, carried on at the cost of the province and distributed to every school section, which is a powerful engine—and last not least he is the Pope of Methodism. Cayley is terribly afraid of him and leaves me to fight him alone, Ridout of the bank is in mortal terror lest his revelations should get him into trouble, even our Chancellor * who is one of the most opinionative and overbearing men I know, who rules the Court of Chancery with a rod of iron and has converted the two Vice Chancellors into lay figures, who bullies the Senate of the University, is visibly cowed in the presence of Ryerson. He is surrounded as by an atmosphere with such a concentrated essence of respectability, and meets all opposition with such a calm unruffled air of conscious superiority that I will not deny that I am half afraid of him myself. I have had several spats with the Chancellor and he does not bully me as he does the rest, and if he does a little sometimes I submit to it because he really is a first rate man and a strong hand at the helm is much wanted I had also a spat with Ryerson once to whom I gave a very much deserved lecture which he bore with the air of a martyr prepared to endure even more than that in a just cause, and when I had done and silence prevailed in the Senate I felt astonished at myself that I should have assailed such self sustained virtue. I would rather meet the Chancellor any day and as for the Board of Works it will be a flea bite in comparison.

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* See note p. 239

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* The Hon William Hume Blake (1809-1870), chancellor of Upper Canada (1850-62) and chancellor of the University of Toronto (1853-56).

So much for public accounts, however you will be glad to hear that I have got a first rate man in Mr. Cruse. Neat, and accurate; rather precise and deliberate, as becomes a bookkeeper, but not slow, and above all with a head to devise something new as well as to carry out what is established. He is already beginning to save me a great deal of trouble. I think after all it was my best course not to have a chief clerk at all until I had so far seen my way as to know what I intended to do. I have opened a ledger into which all public expenditure of every kind will enter under the heading of the different services for which it is paid including also, to complete the system of double entry, the authorities for paying. There is nothing similar to this kept in any office. The ledger in the Inspector General's Department is kept under the heading of the authorities, the services being lumped up and no special funds come into it, being kept in a separate book. I do not know how they manage it. I cannot see my way clearly on that system. On my own I do. The great difficulty I anticipated I have got removed, viz: getting the requisite data. They have commenced now sending me the orders in Council regularly, and I have arranged to have the duplicate warrants filed in my office, so that I have a complete record both of authorities and payments.

The Ministry are in a most contemptible state of confusion. The Ministry themselves and the party supporting them want Sir Allan* to resign and he who is ill in bed won't. They dare not, for that would leave him in, and there is no knowing what advice he might give the Governor General. John Ross [*] resigned yesterday on Grand Trunk questions and a Hincksite (a very good fellow) succeeds him. I think there is no doubt Sir Allan must go, and I think Cayley also. John A. Macdonald is now the recognized leader, but he is anything but strong in reality. There is a talk of bringing Robert Baldwin [†] into Parliament again, in which case a strong ministry might be formed without Macdonald, but at present apparently he must be the nucleus. There is a sad deficiency of available men. The parties are so split up that no man can tell what will come next. The present ministry is at any rate only a temporary evil.

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* Sir Allan Napier MacNab (1798-1862), president of the council and prime minister since 1854. He resigned his office in May, 1856

Yours etc.,

JOHN LANGTON

TO HIS BROTHER, WM. LANGTON

Toronto, May 24th, 1856

MY DEAR WILLIAM,

We have had a very stirring time of it in the political world of late and my ladies have got so much interested in it that they generally go to the house every night to hear the debates. The whole of this session has been a state of chronic crisis for the ministry, though there are of course fits of the disease which look as if they were really going to lead to some change. There have been no less than five want of confidence votes during the session, in which the ministry has come off victorious, but only to be exposed to the same thing the next week. The last has been the most serious as the agony has lasted nearly a fortnight. The debate lasted Wednesday, Thursday and Friday and, as Saturday is always a holiday, every one expected that it would end that night, but for some reason or other the ministry themselves were evidently anxious to postpone the decision and the debate was adjourned again to Monday. On Monday night however the eastern steamer did not come in from bad weather, and as several opposition members were on board who had been home for the Sunday it was the opposition this time which wanted delay. I sat up till four a.m. when I left them in hot debate and found them at it still when I returned soon after nine in the morning. At noon the missing men arrived and one would have thought that they had enough of it; however they kept it up till past midnight again, when the vote was taken with a majority of twenty-three for ministers. But the Upper Canada vote was six against them, and of the absent five, two were opposition men, two were with great difficulty persuaded by ministers to keep out of the House, and Sir Allan himself was the fifth. This from our peculiar position led to a further complication. It has always been a doubtful question whether the ministry are bound to have a double majority. Most men repudiate the doctrine and yet it is frequently acted upon, and as long as our present system continues of a ministry half Upper and half Lower Canadian it is impossible entirely to ignore the sectional majorities. In the present instance it is more particularly complicated because it is a coalition ministry, two of the Upper Canada section being Reformers * and three Conservatives,† and all the reform supporters have deserted them but four. In fact there is no doubt that the ministry as a whole has lost the confidence of the House and country although it may not suit people's book to turn them out just yet. It did not therefore create surprise, when the House met on Wednesday, that none of the ministry were in their places and that the Solicitor General ‡ moved the adjournment till Friday. It is pretty well known that all the Upper Canadians except Sir Allan tendered their resignation but Sir Edmund would not acknowledge the double majority principle and refused to accept it on that ground and Sir Allan on the same ground would not tender his. Upon this the whole ministry Upper and Lower resigned except Sir Allan who said His Excellency might fill up his place but he would not give even a colour to the doctrine by voluntarily giving up Now comes the most curious part of the business Sir Edmund entrusted Colonel Taché, the senior French member of the old cabinet, with the formation of a new ministry. He called in J. A MacDonald, and between them they reestablished exactly the old ministry except Sir Allan. The thing was really most absurd. The country has certainly no confidence in Sir Allan who is looked upon as the embodiment of Upper Canada Toryism but to replace him as Premier by Col. Taché, who is the essence of Lower Canada Toryism, would certainly not win back many of their Upper Canada friends, especi-

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[*] The Hon. John Rose (1818-1871), a follower of the Hon. Robert Baldwin, appointed a legislative councillor in December, 1848 He had been speaker of the Legislative Council in the Conservative ministries of 1854 and 1855, but he resigned the office on April 18, 1856 He was succeeded by Colonel Taché, who continued for a time to hold the office of receiver-general In April, 1856, the Hon. Joseph Curran Morrison (1816-1885) was brought into the Cabinet without a portfolio. In May, 1856, he became receiver-general

[†] The Hon Robert Baldwin (1804-1858), prime minister of Canada from 1842 to 1844 and from 1848 to 1851.

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* Spence and Morrison.

† Macdonald, Cayley, and the Hon P M Vankoughnet (1823-1869), president of the council and minister of agriculture.

‡ The Hon (afterwards Sir) Henry Smith (1812-1868), solicitor-general for Upper Canada.

ally as what had shaken the Upper Canada Liberals lately was the abandonment of everything to the Quebec-Priest-Tory section of Lower Canada whom Col. Taché represents. Individually Sir Allan has done no harm this session as he has been confined to his bed with the gout since the second week. If therefore the old ministry come back to face the same majority against them it must only be that they have abandoned their double majority ground on which they resigned, after getting rid of the only man amongst them who held the same constitutional doctrine which they now are prepared to hold. On Friday* the old man, who is pluck to the backbone, was carried into the House in his chair to meet his enemies and his friends and he was enthusiastically received; but the rest were not visible, and the Solicitor General again moved an adjournment till Monday. Sir Allan spoke sitting, but in their absence would not make his full statement. Since then (for the House spoke out very plainly its opinion upon the subject and several new defections were announced) it is rumoured that the more prudent of the ministry will not keep office, and it is doubtful whether even on Monday they will be ready to announce themselves.

What has made these debates the more interesting to us is that I have been lugged into them. I told you that I had given evidence before the Committee on Public Accounts which would beget a row, and the committee very cunningly contrived to present their report the day the want of confidence vote came on. It and the evidence were not printed when the debate was going on, but the report was read, and it and the newspapers made a great deal more of my evidence than it amounted to. The committee and the papers founded charges on my evidence against the ministry some of which were true enough, though the system established long before their day and not themselves was in fault, and others which were really not warranted by the facts. The impression however left on the House and country is that I made the charges. Now of the three departments implicated the Postmaster General made the best defence he could without naming me; the Board of Works, the worst of the lot, was very polite; but the Crown Lands defended themselves by attacking me. Cauchon, who certainly has mistaken the spelling of his name, read in Parliament three papers prepared by his subordinates, declaring my statements in the evidence to be entirely false and charging me with neglecting my duty and never having audited their accounts at all. Now the facts are these. On the 28th of February I wrote to him with my remarks upon his accounts. It was a long letter but I will only mention three points which were made the foundation of the attack. (1) In his account with the Receiver General he professes to have an unapplied balance of £10,000 odd of which no notice was taken in the accounts sent to me, and this £10,000, which I heard of from the Receiver General, does not at all correspond with their books. In my letter I asked for an explanation of this which I could not understand. (2) In the Woods and Forests account there is an account of expenditure to the extent of £9,000 entirely without vouchers, which I mentioned to him almost in the words I have used to you. (There were however many similar things remarked upon for of a total expenditure of £58,000 there were no vouchers sent to me for £17,000 and insufficient ones for £25,000.) (3) He had paid in to the Receiver General or professed to have paid in £5,000 odd which he had never collected. To this letter I got no reply till April 24th, and from that day to this nothing more than that brief letter of half a page. When asked by the committee whether I had any remarks to make upon the Crown Lands account, I gave them a copy of this letter; so that if it contains a charge, the charge was at any rate made to the commissioner himself. In his speech he said that he had not considered my letter of any particular importance and that it had been altogether overlooked, and it appears that the man at the head of the Woods and Forests had never even heard of it till the committee reported. He then charges me with neglecting my duty because I had never come to his office to examine his books, etc., and says that my charge that there was an expenditure of £9,000 without vouchers is without the least foundation in fact, in proof of which he brought a wheelbarrow-full of papers into the House. Moreover he, who has made himself ridiculous by converting his office into a convent and not allowing his clerks to speak to any one except in his presence or that of his secretary, permits them to send these documents to the papers, altered in essential particulars from what he read in the House, and to publish letters making further charges against me. I have had a little private correspondence with him, arising from my asking for copies of these documents which he at first would not give me. Its tone has not been very friendly, but it is not to him or in the papers that I will defend myself; my defence shall be made in the House where the charges were made. My first step was to write two official letters to Cayley, the one short stating that my duties as auditor were to ask for all necessary information and audit accounts in my own office which a Minister of the Crown who is responsible to the House alone may give or withhold as he pleases on his own responsibility, and showing that I had asked for the information and had not got it. The second entered into details of the particular items which had been the subject of debate, in order that he might be posted up. The first letter was intended to be read in the House, and in it I told him plainly that I wrote it in order that he might defend me. I showed them both to Macdonald who approved of what I had done. Cayley after receiving the letters spoke to me about them and professed to be very indignant at Cauchon, nevertheless he never opened his mouth in the House upon the subject Macdonald it is true spoke of me in terms of warm personal friendship and told the House that I had only accepted office upon the distinct pledge that I should be quite unfettered in the matter of auditing, but it was not his place to defend me against Cauchon and other Frenchmen who followed in his wake, as he could know nothing of the particulars. It was Cayley's place, and as soon as the debate was over I wrote another official letter to him telling him so and asking that he should either do so or intimate to me that my conduct did not admit of defence. I also reminded him that I had pointed out to him as certain to occur exactly what had happened, that if the auditor remained in his present position the Inspector General would at every moment be obliged either to disown his own officer for doing his duty or come into collision with his colleagues. That as making the office independent had not met with his approbation the only other escape from the dif-

ficulty was to hold no communication with Members of the Executive except through him and asking for his instructions how I was to conduct the business of the office. (My present intention is to audit the accounts and make such remarks and applications for further information as may be required and send them upstairs to Cayley to sign.) He cannot avoid giving me an answer to this letter, and if he will not undertake my defence in the House I will get a private friend to move for copies of my letters. I am sure I shall be supported in the House, and I am not sorry that the contest has come on as it has. It will perhaps result in making the office what it ought to be and that sooner or later will bring an increase of salary, perhaps it may leave things as they are, and perhaps it may result in my getting an intimation to resign. The three chances are about even, but I have put a bold front on it hitherto and I will fight it out manfully. I know that all the Frenchmen in the ministry without exception are very indignant at me. There are only two members of the ministry that I can really depend upon much, and I know too much of politicians to rely very much upon them if it would inconvenience their own position. Between ourselves my principal dependence is their fears. There is not a man in Canada, except Hincks, that they would be less inclined to see in Parliament than myself, and I have had a few peeps behind the scenes which would enable me to take up a most formidable position against them. However whilst I talk of the ministry it is doubtful whether we have a ministry, and who my chief may be the day after tomorrow I will not undertake to pronounce.

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* May 23, 1856

Whilst these exciting times have been in progress there has been a little underplot going on which came

to its crisis on Thursday and has resulted in an addition of £200 a year to my income, at least an addition to that extent for two years, and that without any material addition to my work and responsibility. Dr. McCaul* the President of University College . . . was our Vice Chancellor. When the time for election came on I was asked to allow myself to be proposed. I consented provided I was not to have any personal canvassing to do and I never spoke to one of the Senate except the man who proposed me, but there was plenty of canvassing and political and all sorts of other influence used to bring people up or keep them away. The result was that almost everybody stayed away and I got four votes and he two. The Chancellor is evidently very indignant, which cannot be helped, but on the other hand the Professors are delighted. No doubt I shall have some extra work, but as the Chancellor, Vice Chancellor and I used to do all the work before, it won't make any very great difference and £400 is not to be despised.

I forget whether I told you the result of Dr. Ryerson's affair. Three or four days after his return home he called and entered into a long discussion about his accounts generally, and trying to make all sorts of reasons for his large balances and throwing the blame upon the Government and everybody but himself and after a two hours conference he put on his hat to go away, and at the door it seemed suddenly to strike him that he had forgotten to speak about the interest. He said that £900 of it was credited in his books to the

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* The Rev. John McCaul (1807-1887), successively president of King's College, the University of Toronto, and University College, Toronto (1853-80). See J. King, *McCaul, Croft, Forneri* (Toronto, 1914).

Normal school, although he did not give any explanation how it came that he had made no mention of it in the accounts rendered to me. As to the rest he said he thought he had a right to it, and said he had once spoken to Hincks about it, etc, etc., but if I thought it right he would refund it.* I said very little in reply and don't mean to say any more, but when he next squares his accounts with me he will find his balance in hand increased accordingly. We are very gracious and I was told that he was very anxious that I should be proposed as Vice Chancellor, but he forgot to come and vote for me.

I am in some doubt whether to send this letter by mail tomorrow or keep it for another week, so as to give the conclusion of the crisis. I think however that anything we may hear during next week will only be the beginning of another crisis so I will not postpone this letter.

Yours, etc.,

JOHN LANGTON

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* Dr Ryerson's treatment of his balances as a source of private profit had some warrant in English tradition It is true that the tradition had been abandoned in England for some hundred years, but tradition dies hard, especially at a distance from the centre of reform Lecky, in his History of England in the Eighteenth Century, vol. II, p 478, (London, 1878), says.—

"On his [sc. Pitt's] appointment as Paymaster of the Forces in 1746, he at once and for ever established his character by two striking instances of magnanimity His predecessors had long been accustomed to invest in government securities the large floating balance which was left in their hands for the payment of the troops and to appropriate the interest, [and also to receive as a perquisite of office one half per cent. of all subsidies voted by Parliament to foreign princes] These [two] sources of emolument being united to the regular salary of the office, made it in time of war extremely lucrative, and though they had never been legalized they were universally recognized, and had been received without question and without opposition by a long line of distinguished statesmen."—*W. A L*

To his Brother, Wm. Langton

November 9th, 1856

My dear William,

The last letter to you I think left me in the midst of a very pretty quarrel with the Crown Lands Department, which is now happily brought to a close. Having done all I could in the matter I left things to take their chance, throwing the responsibility upon my superiors. From time to time things came in to be audited, upon which occasions I took the opportunity of reporting that I had no materials for an efficient audit, and having put that on record I troubled myself no more about it. But by degrees the materials became more plentiful and the last batch of accounts were so satisfactory all proper vouchers being there, and almost all my suggestions of improvements in the manner of keeping and rendering being adopted, and my remarks upon them were so promptly replied to, that I thought I might go and call at the office personally, which I was the more anxious to do because I had some business of my own there, touching a timber license worth more than a hundred pounds, in which I was completely at the mercy of the commissioner, or rather his chief clerk of the Woods and Forests who was the individual who was at the bottom of all my differences with the department. We had a very amicable talk over matters of account, and when I introduced my own affairs the clerk was sent for and ordered to prepare my license. Since then most of the former deficiencies have been by degrees sent in, and further suggestions of reforms have been acceded to, so that I may consider that department as fairly brought to a satisfactory state as far as auditing is concerned. The subs are evidently very glum, but the result is altogether satisfactory enough. The old quarrel may therefore be considered almost amongst the things that were, and therefore the papers relating to it which I send you have lost part of their interest, nevertheless I send them.

In the meantime I have been constantly at Cayley ✓ about other reforms, sometimes verbally and sometimes by written reports, but he is altogether impracticable and immoveable. He can see nothing but difficulties, and if he does agree with you he is afraid of doing anything for fear of offending somebody. Latterly I have given up attempting to make anything of him and do not see him for weeks together. Whenever I have cause to recommend any change or to remark upon anything wrong I put on record a written report, but I never allude to the subject verbally unless he begins it, and never expect (and therefore am not disappointed) any action on his part. Being determined however that I would clear myself from any imputation of negligence I determined to put my representations in a more formal shape, and therefore prepared about half a dozen memoranda in which I entered into detail upon a great many subjects where some action is required, which I submitted to the Board of Audit and had them recorded on our minutes and got the Board to assent to a minute embracing the heads of the memoranda. This with the memoranda themselves I sent to Cayley, and took care that the other ministers should know of its existence. That is nearly two months ago and I never have had the smallest conversation with Cayley upon the subject, but I saw the document lying on the Governor General's table the other day and I can perceive the minute hearing fruit.

Whilst the Crown Lands, where there is really nothing very wrong except a most complicated and inefficient system of account-keeping which they have inherited from bygone days, kicked up a great fuss about my very inoffensive remarks, the Board of Works, where everything is wrong and corruption of the grossest kind prevails, treated me with the greatest suavity but offered a most effectual passive resistance to an audit. I used to remonstrate about once a fortnight in a letter to Cayley, which no doubt went into the pigeon hole; but the Board of Works ignored the existence of the Audit Office. At last I wrote him a letter, enumerating all the letters I had at different times written to him and to the Board of Works, and saying that I could do no more and should await his instructions for the future. I took it to him when I knew Joe Morrison * was with him, and so the question was discussed, subsequently brought before Council, and they valiantly resolved that if the accounts were not sent in they would dismiss the book-keeper. Now the chief commissioner is a very polite Frenchman who knows and cares nothing about public works or accounts but has the task assigned to him in the present ministry of keeping in good humour the Quebec section of the Lower Canadians, besides some private interest in feeding a certain Baby, a great contractor, through whose hands from £100,000 to £200,000 of public money pass annually and of whom I have always observed that wherever his name appears the only vouchers I can find are that he got the money (which I can very well believe), but as to whether justly or not the docu-

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* *Supra*, note page 257

ments are almost silent. Then there is the Assistant Commissioner or non-political head—a jolly fellow brought out by Lord Sydenham. . . And thirdly there is the Secretary who physiognomically bears a great resemblance to a cat shamming to be asleep, and his actions do not belie his face. Lemieux receives you with the greatest suavity (and he really is a very pleasant man) he assents to the justness of everything you say, but he does not profess to know anything about details and refers you to Killaly. Killaly is also a most agreeable man, he is quite shocked at the irregularity in the department but he is only an engineer, he never meddles with anything else, he knows no more about accounts than he does of politics and refers you to Mr. Begley. Mr. Begley is not an agreeable man, his situation is a very unpleasant one, he is only a servant, he writes letters as he is instructed, and if he is instructed to send accounts he will do so, but he is only a servant and you must speak to Mr. Lemieux or Killaly. So they wisely determined to dismiss the book-keeper who came into office about six months ago and inherited books which they never tried to balance for a great many years and naturally have failed to accomplish now. But the book-keeper fortunately can show that the accounts for the quarter ending 30th April were made out several months ago, but Mr. Begley told him not to send them till further orders. This occurred about a month ago, nevertheless I did not get that quarter's accounts till yesterday and from a cursory glance I can see that they are very incomplete. It is pretty clear that we must have a fight before long and I am preparing for it.

In other respects I get along pretty well. The only other fight which I told you of, with Dr. Ryerson, has ended in a truce. I have done my duty in reporting the malversation, and at the end of each quarter in reporting on his accounts I call his attention to the £1,800 I have charged him with for interest received, to which in his reply he alludes in some such sentence as thus, "The remaining observations will form the subject of another communication," which never comes. I am also industriously reducing his balance by refusing his applications for more money, against which he loudly remonstrates. John Macdonald acknowledged that they ought to dismiss him but they dare not. I should be sorry for that for he is an useful man, but I think their courage might extend to making him disgorge.* Perhaps, when Parliament meets, of two dangers they may choose the least In other respects we get along smoothly enough. A man who is willing to work generally gets plenty to do, and they have commenced referring all sorts of things to me which do not strictly belong to my department. Amongst other things they have gradually got into the way of sending down applications for warrants to me for report, which Cayley always objected to at first I think it is more correct that I should report whether a payment is authorized before it is made than afterwards, but there are difficulties. An order in council must necessarily be authority enough for me and precludes my enquiring whether the order in council is founded on just grounds, but if I report upon a claim for money it is evidently not very easy for them to pass an order contrary to my report. Sometimes too an application is referred to me after the order in council has passed, when I have to interpret it; no very easy thing sometimes. In both these cases it occasionally happens that my report is not what they want it to be altogether, and it comes back to me with an unofficial intimation that they want the report altered. It is treading on ticklish ground sometimes. I have modified the report sometimes and I have refused to alter it, but I generally get out of the difficulty by submitting to Council whether it should be so or so, or submitting whether they meant so or so, and in almost all these cases I have found that they decide according to my original report. It is one thing to do a questionable act at once without explanation and another to decide between two courses pointed out to you.

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* This did occur in 1858, according to the *Globe's* review of the Ryerson case in the issue of January 28, 1859 (daily). Other references to the case may be found in the *Globe*, in the weekly editions of May 28, June 4, and June 11, 1858, and in the daily editions of March 9 and March 22, 1859, and February 22, 1860

I have been thinking of striking for wages. I have raised the salary of all my clerks. I engaged Mr. Cruse at £300 but I am so much pleased with him that in June I raised him to £350 and the other day (that being the limit of my authority), recommended him for £400. I think I am worth £750.

My next great trouble is the University. When I was made Vice Chancellor I considered the salary as ✓ clear gain, and it is pretty nearly so because I should have worked nearly as hard for nothing. But one way or another it takes up nearly half my time and brings me somewhat unpleasantly into collision with people with whom I don't want to collide. We are acting under a most iniquitous law by which Government constituted itself the guardian of the University, and they administer our funds and property without the slightest regard to the interests of their ward. It is a little fund, no *little* fund indeed, of which Parliament knows nothing and which has nothing to do with the provincial revenue. Just at this present moment they are improving some property of Cayley's mother in law with our money, and I am going to write to night a formal remonstrance upon the subject to His Excellency as visitor. He sees the evil and keeps saying that we must be made independent of governments, but he himself is always interfering in the paltriest details. It was only yesterday, because the Senate would not get him out of a scrape which he got into by interfering beyond his province, that he was so cross and snappish with me that in anybody but a Governor General it would have been called ungentlemanly. However I must put off the University to another time

Yours, etc.,

JOHN LANGTON

A LETTER ABOUT UNIVERSITY AFFAIRS

John Langton
1856

A LETTER ABOUT UNIVERSITY AFFAIRS

Toronto, Nov. 12, 1856

Before entering into my own position in University matters I think I must give you a sketch of its history. It originated in our energetic old Bishop* who, when land was comparatively a drug, got together an endowment which, after being for twenty-five years and more a perfect mine of wealth for speculators, is worth now little if anything short of £500,000. The University park of 150 acres in Toronto is even now worth £1,000 an acre, and what it may reach eventually no man can tell, though I hope it will never be sold. Besides this we have a great deal of valuable land in all parts of the Province, unsold and unproductive, and an income from rents and investments of upwards of £15,000 a year. About 1840, when Church of Englandism became less fashionable, King's College was legislated out of the Bishop's hands and passed through many phases, but the greatest change was in 1847. The endowment having even then become valuable, an effort was made to have it divided. There was to be a central University and local denominational Colleges were to get a share of the funds. This was the conservative doctrine, but Baldwin† always stuck out for the integrity of the institution and, as his party came in about that time with an overwhelming majority, Canada presented the astonishing sight of a nation voting against their individual interests and each denomination refusing to take a share of the plunder. Baldwin's bill converted King's College into the University of Toronto, an absolutely godless institution according to the pietists. A very few years however proved the bad working, not of his conception, but of his machinery. The convocation was not a numerous body enough to have much influence, though they had great powers; and the great majority of them had got their degrees in the Bishop's time and seceded to his rival institution Trinity College. The professors who formed the senate found all their time occupied in managing the selling and leasing of the lands and disentangling the immense mass of speculation which had existed. The professors of various branches of medicine were so numerous as to outwit the rest, and they first lowered the other salaries and then raised their own. Before three years the University had got into very bad odour, and had degenerated into a very expensive and very bad medical school. Hincks* now stepped in with a new Act. He abolished convocation and the faculties of Law and Medicine and their host of professors; he assumed the management of the property, and made two corporations out of one, viz. University College, the teaching body, and the University of Toronto, an abstraction for granting degrees to which University College and all the other colleges in the country were supposed to be affiliated, whilst Upper Canada College, a High School, (also an institution of the Bishop's creation with an income of nearly £6,000), lost its corporate existence and was placed under the management of the University. This was all very well in theory, but in practice it has been worse than Baldwin's measure. It is all very well affiliating colleges, but as several of these bodies had charters for conferring degrees it involved the absurdity of affiliating one university to another. None of the colleges got any share of the spoil, which was all they cared for, and we further reduced the link by not making membership of some college necessary to membership of the University. It is somewhat of a novel experiment but I think a very sound one. We admit to degrees, scholarships, etc., anybody who will come up to our standard, which is a very much higher one than any of the local colleges exact or are capable of bringing their students up to. In practice therefore we have but one affiliated college, viz. University College, and yet the Senate (with the exception of myself and two or three others) consists of the heads of these other colleges, who bear us no love and, if they attend at all, do it only to obstruct. It has also had this ill effect, that the really important body, University College, has been thrown entirely into the hands of its President and only representative in our Senate, Dr. McCaul* . . . The professors, who are a body of as good men as any country need wish to possess, are extinguished and Dr. McCaul is University College; and as U. Coll. is the real successor of the late University and is maintained out of the same funds with no well drawn line of partition in the purse, he was very near becoming the University also. Then as to the funds—everything is vested in the Queen. We cannot even pay any current expense out of income without a statute to which the Governor* considers that he must give an active assent, that is he must consult his council and keep us sometimes six months waiting for the fiat. At least this was his interpretation of his visitational powers at first, but he is beginning to think a passive assent, (reserving to himself the power of disallowing), will be sufficient, and in practice we do spend money without any statute or consulting him at all. As to the principal, we cannot touch that without an order in council placing it at our disposal; and there ought to be a similar order placing parts of our income at our disposal, but as none are ever passed we go on spending as I said before without any formal authority. The whole thing is a mass of confusion. Ordinary current expenses must be paid and I draw cheques which the bursar pays, and, there being no line drawn, Dr. McCaul also draws cheques; and as it is often doubtful whether it is an University or a college matter the bursar, who has to come to me to have his accounts audited, sometimes will pay the Dr.'s cheques and sometimes won't without my signature also. But if the Government are careless of us sometimes and leave a statute for raising a servant's wages £15 a year unsanctioned for six months, and for a year and a half never even acknowledge receipt of our application to have money placed at our disposal for buildings and a library, in other cases they are very attentive to our funds. They ordered the bursar to lend £15,000 to a bankrupt railway, which would have been entirely lost had not another company a year afterwards bought them out and

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* The Right Rev. the Hon John Strachan (1778-1867), first bishop of Toronto, and first president of King's College, Toronto

† See note p 257.

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* See note p. 227.

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* See note p 265

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* Sir Edmund Walker Head, Bart (1805-1868), governor-general of Canada (1854-61). Head had been from 1830 to 1837 a fellow of Merton College, Oxford.

somebody in the House (not having our case in view) put a clause into the Act that they should pay the debts of the bankrupt. We had a lot of land which in consequence of some of the new railways is going to be the site of a village. We have more money than we could or the Government would let us spend, but they ordered the land to be sold for £2,000 whilst four months afterwards it fetched £8,000 and is now probably worth £20,000. But the grossest of all cases was perpetrated immediately after the passing of the Act. Hincks passed another Act authorizing the Government to take such portion of the University park as might not be wanted for University purposes for the erection of Parliament Buildings; and the Senate not having been yet appointed, without enquiry what we wanted for University purposes, they forthwith took possession of the whole, turned the College out of its building and transferred them temporarily to the old Parliament house, and forthwith began draining, road making, etc, and, although the plan of Parliament Buildings fell through, the Board of Works continued to spend £10,000 in preparation. When the Government moved here the old Parliament Buildings were wanted, so they wanted to transfer the College to a vacant orphans' asylum, (a more appropriate suggestion), but remonstrances having been made they did add to and fit up the old medical school, (the old college buildings which cost us £15,000 having in the meantime been gutted by the Board of Works and rendered uninhabitable). This was the state of affairs when I came to live at Toronto. The next encroachment of the Government was opening a road through the park, without the common courtesy of consulting us about it. This led to a formal remonstrance. Three members of the Senate and three members of the Government met, with the Governor as moderator, and we agreed to a memorandum that our application for money to build, etc., should be answered (after a year and a half), which it was, and they gave us £75,000 for the buildings and £20,000 for the library; that they should hand over to us all the park west of the avenue, which they also did, reserving to themselves the other fifty* temporarily till it was decided where the seat of Government was to be, when it was also to be given up if not wanted for Parliament Buildings; and lastly that they should do nothing to this other half in the meantime without consulting us. It has been decided by a solemn vote of Parliament that the seat of Government shall not be at Toronto; nevertheless they won't give up the east half, though we wanted it for the site of our new buildings (which I am glad of, for it was a bad site); and, without any notice to us and in spite of our remonstrances, they fitted up the old college buildings (which we wanted to pull down and use the materials) as a lunatic asylum, enclosing about twenty acres of our park; and to add insult to injury the official designation is *The University Lunatic Asylum*. This was the feather that broke Blake's† back and he resigned the Chancellorship. The nominal feather at least, for I suspect he had other reasons.

This is a very long story, but it is necessary for you to understand my position. The University itself has hardly a friend in the country, and many enemies. The Church looks upon us as godless, and *perhaps* would have no objection to a slice of the endowment. The Methodists, the next most powerful body with Ryerson[*] at their head, make no secret of their hatred and their aspirations for a share of the money. The Church of Rome professes to be friendly, but though some of our more active members of the Senate are Catholic it is observable that we never have had one Catholic student. The Church of Scotland has an University of its own which is very poor and very inefficient, which may lead one to suspect how the wind blows though they are too cautious to express an opinion. The only powerful sect with us is the Free Church to which may be added some Baptists, Independents and other small fry. The Law[†] ignores our degrees except those in Arts, and the leading members of the bar are not churchmen. Medicine is against us almost to a man, for the dissatisfied professors are establishing private schools and fear a restoration of the faculty. Baldwin and his friends stand aloof and prophecy evil of us. Of the five Upper Canada Ministers, three don't conceal their desire to divide the endowment, and one is too insignificant to have an opinion or to give it weight if he had one. The governor general is about the best friend we have, but he is a very difficult man to deal with and brings old country notions to apply where they will not fit. A governor general is a trump card certainly but in some respects the least reliable card in the pack, first, because he must do after all what his ministry wants and he can never tell from day to day who they may be, and secondly, because from his position he acts upon very imperfect knowledge of facts, one day ridiculously alarmed at some noisy newspaper editor and the next day ear-wigged by you know not whom. This is certainly not a very flourishing state for an university, and my own position in it does not make it better. Here am I a perfect stranger in Toronto come suddenly amongst them to upset old established ways and men, not loved much you may depend upon it by Dr. McCaul, and looked upon with suspicion at any rate by Blake and his friends, brought into constant collision with the Government whose servant I am, and with nobody to back me except the professors who from hatred of McCaul stick to me like bricks but without much power, and half a dozen very worthy Baptist, Independent and Presbyterian parsons who enable me to carry a majority in the Senate. I have nobody to consult with, for my parsonic allies are quiet men who don't like any more responsibility than is involved in a vote and the professors very wisely don't like appearing openly in the troubled waters. It has been a very difficult card to play even if I had succeeded to the helm in smooth water, but to take the command in a storm is nervous work. You may easily imagine from what I have said before that the ship is not in the very best order or the crew much to be relied on, but you cannot conceive unless you saw it the utter state of confusion in which everything is. I *must* put things into some order and in doing so I cannot help at every step treading on somebody's toes. Dr. McCaul is no doubt a first rate scholar and a very clever man and he has one element fitting him for command, that whether it is by bullying or by compromising or by artful countermining he never loses sight of the main object—to have his own way in the end; but he is absolutely deficient in the talent of order. Partly perhaps it is design. The end he always keeps in view, the means he is quite unscrupulous about, and provided a thing will serve his turn in the end he cares not for its being suitable to the present state of affairs. No matter how heterogeneous or inconsistent with each other the materials may be, if he has or thinks he has the clue by which he can fit each of them into some place in his proposed building they will serve his turn. You may think I am prejudiced against the man because we have been brought into rivalry, but I formed my opinion of him very early in the day and those that know him best entertain the same. Whilst I was writing the previous page I had a visit from Dr. Wilson[*] one of our professors and, the conversation turning on McCaul, he warned me for the fiftieth time to beware of him and he added:—if he opposes you you may be safe enough by fighting it out, but if ever he entirely agrees with you and appears to go cordially with you, beware, he will trip you up if he can. I omitted one trait of McCaul's—when a man has such complicated plans on his hands he can rarely be certain what turn things may take and he very rarely commits himself so far to an opinion that he cannot withdraw from it, or does a thing so effectually that it cannot be undone. If he does not see clearly how it will work in, he had rather do nothing and wait the course of events. Blake on the other hand was as determined in gaining his object, but he went straight to it regardless of any obstacles. He was very imperious and hard working and wanted not only to do everything his own way but to do it himself, and as his duties in Chancery left him little leisure he left things undone or half done, or, what was worse, to be finished by McCaul. These two men had the entire management of everything and a pretty mess they made of it. Things had got to such a pass, there was such a want of system, that I *had* to undertake a reform. There is hardly a thing that was done which I have not had more or less to undo, and that with the greatest difficulty in finding out what was the former practice. Blake was ill after his resignation and is now in England, the professors have always been studiously kept in the dark by McCaul, and McCaul himself impenetrable. Some little I can glean from the registrar and bursar, but I am compelled to tread on their toes too. They have been very cordial with me, for they hate McCaul, but the bursar's office stops more than £3,000 a year out of our £15,000, which I want to reform, and the registrar is the bursar's son in law. The deeper I search the more I find confusion pervading everything. The monetary system or rather no system is radically bad, the limits of the College and University authority almost undefined, the very course of instruction or rather examination has to be entirely remodelled (here the professors can really assist me with advice and they never were consulted or their views properly placed before the Senate, whilst McCaul is a classical scholar and nothing more). In this branch of my reforms I find very great difficulty, for though I think I can carry my changes with some compromises I cannot help seeing that my parsonic friends whilst voting with me have some doubts whether I am really competent to upset a whole system and build up a new one in opposition to McCaul who has been a fellow or a president of a college all his life, and I can well expense them for I have considerable doubts myself. Another change I have had to make which is anything but popular with the students. We had a much larger income than sufficed for our wants and, proceeding upon the plan that anything we left would be snapped up by others and only sharpen their appetite, we spent in some things most lavishly, granting scholarships and prizes without limit, so that it was the exception rather than the rule if a student had not a scholarship or half a dozen prizes. But now we have not only very much increased our expenses in other ways but we are about to spend on buildings, library and museum near £100,000 from our capital, and to enable our income thereby reduced to meet necessary expenses we must cut off the superfluities. I therefore attacked the prizes and scholarships, and succeeded in reducing the latter to one third and the former to one-tenth. Upper Canada College has been a great source of trouble. It is a school endowed with about £6,000 a year of public money, and it is without exception the worst school I ever saw or heard of. Blake bad commenced the attack here, and as a preparatory measure had got the Principal and the worst master pensioned off. How bad is the system, or again I say no system, you may imagine from this one fact There is a commercial form, viz. boys who do not learn Latin and Greek Out of nine masters, some of them with £500 or £600 a year, one at £100 a year has been assigned to a class of about fifty in which, on the negative principle of not learning Latin and Greek, are placed boys ranging from ten to eighteen years of age, whatever their qualifications may be in other respects Blake I say had commenced the attack and had sketched out a very good scheme, which is however in abeyance till we get a new Principal, which we are not likely to do in a hurry I am afraid. Being anxious to get a good man we made his salary £750 which, with his share of the fees and a capital house, firewood, etc., is at least equal to £1,000 a year, which is as much as any of the judges get except the Chief Justice and the Chancellor. We also arranged that he was to have charge of the boarding house, which has hitherto been a disgrace to the school and upon which we have been expending this summer £2,000 to £3,000. Now the Governor promised to get us a man and being totally ignorant of the country he told him that he might probably by the boarders raise his income £400 or £500 more. Our man very wisely I think refused to have anything to do with boarding except superintendence, and suggested that we might take the profits of the boarding service ourselves and allow him something towards the same sum by fees or some other way. Now if the Principal managed the boarding house, if he was a good manager he might have made something of it though never £400 a year, but if we are to manage it we must pay somebody else, for the service, what the Principal would have got; so we totally declined to make any addition to the salary, and the Governor was in a great pet and said he washed his hands of the whole concern. The spending of the money I think I have at last got into a somewhat more satisfactory condition. I have got committees appointed, each regulated by its own statute, for the buildings, the grounds, the library, the museum, the observatory (toward which the Government contributes), and Upper Canada College (which has its own funds). All of these have money placed at their disposal from time to time by the Senate and are responsible for the spending of it, instead of the miscellaneous system which formerly prevailed, all centering at last on Dr. McCaul. On these committees I have also placed the best of the professors, which for the first time gives them any proper voice in the management of affairs.

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† See note p 255

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[*] The Rev. Egerton Ryerson, superintendent of education.

[†] I mean the profession who, whilst admitting people to practice in two years less who have our degree in Arts, take no notice of our degrees in Law. I don't know what the use of them is. The examination is very absurd, being all on questions of practice and detail whilst it ought to be upon first principles, but I am in hot water enough without attempting to meddle with Blake's programme of law studies. [J. L.]

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[*] Daniel (afterwards Sir Daniel) Wilson (1816-1892), professor of history and English literature in the University of Toronto (1853-92) and president of University College (1881-92).

Since I finished the last sheet I think I have got the examination subjects into a more favourable position than I ever succeeded in doing before. Dr. McCaul and I are a committee to arrange details and it is impossible to move him a step. Day after day we meet and talk over the thing—we apparently get a thing settled one day but it has all to be gone over again the next, and he is constantly starting new ideas, merely I believe to create delay. He has already put the thing off so long that we have been obliged to commence a new year on the old system, but I think by stealing two whole days from the office and sitting up to three o'clock in the morning I have at last got things into train and we may get a new system adopted for next year. I often think I am a fool to trouble myself so much about it. What is the University to me that I should bother myself with it? Why can't I take my £200 a year with as little trouble as possible as long as I stay here? But it is not my nature any more than it would be yours; and besides I am positively ashamed to see our printed programme, such a mass of absurdity is it. I must in vindication of my folly give you a sample or two and there are many more. We have a department of History and a man at the head of it Dr. Daniel Wilson, well known in Europe as well as here, but his department is really ridiculous. In a five years course he only brings English History down to Henry VII, and there is absolutely no other history except that of

Egypt down to Cleopatra and that of Spain under Ferdinand and Isabella, French and German history going with those languages, which are under the care of a very worthy pudding-headed old Italian to whom they have been assigned upon the principle, which appears to be accepted elsewhere as well as in Canada, that foreign languages are safe in the hands of a foreigner. The foreign language department is also most contemptible which must I am afraid he laid at the door of poor Dr. Forneri;[*] but Dr. Wilson is innocent of the shortcomings of history, except in as far as it may be a retribution upon him for the holy hatred with which he regards McCaul, a hatred most religionsly returned. As examples of the inconsistency of our system I may mention that during the whole course three or four scholarships are assigned to Classics and to Mathematics for one to the Natural sciences, but the last year, when we end with five gold medals, two are given to the Natural Sciences and only three amongst all the rest of the departments. Also that, whilst scholarships are confined to men in the first class, there is nothing for the second, and such valuable prizes for the third that I had a man remonstrating the other day at the injustice done to him by the examiner placing him, by mistake be contended, in the first class. We have a department of Metaphysics and Ethics under a most learned and excellent man Dr. Beaven.[†] After the first two years we allow students to exercise options and they may under certain conditions drop Classics, but then they must retain Metaphysics, yet

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[*] James Forneri (1789-1869), professor of modern languages in University College, Toronto (1853-65) See J. King, *op. cit.*

[†] The Rev James Beaven (1801-1875), professor of ethics and metaphysics in King's College, the University of Toronto, and University College, Toronto (1842-71)

Dr. Beaven insists upon examining almost altogether from Aristotle, Cicero, etc., and positively requires them to read more Greek and Latin that Dr. McCaul himself. I argue in vain but I will have my own way in this case, Dr. McCaul assenting and delighted to see me getting into trouble with Dr. Beaven, and the Dr., who in former days on account of Clergy Reserve heresies had told me he looked upon me as little less than a heathen, now plainly intimates that I am also one of the unlettered.

The buildings have been a terrible source of trouble all summer. Money, site, style, plan, elevation, architect's pay, have all been the subject of endless discussion and annoyance. We got the money in Blake's day, but the Governor General seems to think that he is personally responsible for the expenditure and is always interfering, now making light of any expenditure which hits his fancy at the moment and ignoring all difficulty as to squaring our expenses to our reduced income from otherwise appropriated capital, and now overcome with a niggardly fit. The battle of the site too was fought in Blake's day and helped to his defeat for both he and the architect were tempted by a site at the end of a fine avenue nearly a mile long. St. Peter's would look magnificent there, but anything we could build would be but a mushroom at that distance and we should have had to have sacrificed convenience to great elevation. I was not sorry when the lunatic asylum blocked us out from that ground, for we have a beautiful site elsewhere. From this time my troubles commenced. Blake proposed to make me the building committee but I declined unless he and Chief Justice

Draper * were associated with me, promising to do all the work. I had not sufficiently calculated upon Blake's desire to do everything himself, whilst between Chancery and the government he could do nothing. However we took ample powers, and for two valuable months after Cumberland returned † we did nothing. After Blake's resignation I had it all to myself, for Draper does not want to interfere and never does unless I ask his advice, and unless it had been in one man's hands we never could have got along at all. The site being chosen Cumberland drew a first sketch of a Gothic building, but the Governor would not hear of Gothic and recommended Italian, shewing us an example of the style, a palazzo at Sienna which, if he were not Governor General and had written a book on art, I should have called one of the ugliest buildings I ever saw. However after a week's absence the Governor came back with a new idea, it was to be Byzantine; and between them they concocted a most hideous elevation. After this the Governor was absent on a tour for several weeks during which we polished away almost all traces of Byzantine and got a hybrid with some features of Norman, of early English, etc., with faint traces of Byzantium and the Italian palazzo, but altogether a not unsightly building and on his return His Excellency approved. When our Government were taunted in the House with their want of policy and unnatural alliance of parties and they were asked whether they called themselves a conservative or a reform or a coalition ministry, one of them replied that they

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* The Hon. William Henry Draper (1801-1877), chief justice of the court of Common Pleas in Upper Canada (1856-63), and chief justice of Upper Canada (1863-77).

† From England, where he had gone in connection with preparations for the designing of the building.

called themselves the Government of Canada. So we, if asked after the style of our building, may call it the Canadian style; and to an uncritical eye it is a very respectable and rather imposing structure, or will be, but the various breeds which entered into its composition have cropped out in somewhat different proportions in its two principal facades. Concurrently with this of course the plan was progressing, and as the College is also to be accommodated I had to consult its authorities. It has evidently been a sore with McCaul that he has nothing to say to the building, but as I have got absolute power here I will keep it. However I had to ask them to appoint a committee to confer with me and he made a last great effort to consider it a joint building committee, but not being backed by the Professors I escaped that rock. Their demands for space were however outrageous and at last it was only by telling them, as the Governor authorized me to do, that if they did not moderate their expectations he would stop the building altogether that I succeeded in making a compromise. I shewed the plan to the Governor who was in a very bad temper that morning, hardly looked at it, assented, and went on his tour; so the elevation was completed in accordance and I advertised for tenders. When he came back and the whole thing was submitted to him, he counted up the lecture rooms, stormed at our extravagance, and said he would stop the whole thing. However I evaded that difficulty by scratching out the word lecture room and erasing all appearance of seats for the students, when he said it was much more sensible, so we proceeded to stake out the ground. But here an unexpected difficulty arose. It seems that His Excellency had all along thought that the South front was to face the East [West?], and nothing would satisfy him but so it must be and under his superintendence we proceeded to measure and stake out, Cumberland's[*] face exhibiting blank despair for it brought his chemical laboratory where no sun would ever shine into it, his kitchens, etc., into the prettiest part of the grounds, and several other inconveniences which His Excellency said could be easily remedied. However there stands on the ground an elm tree, a remnant of the old forest, with a long stem as such trees have and a little bush on the top of it, not unlike a broom with its long handle stuck into the ground, and it soon became evident that the tree would fall a sacrifice. This he would not permit and when I hinted that it would certainly be blown down before long, he told me it was the handsomest tree about Toronto (as it certainly is one of the tallest), and politely added "but you Canadians have a prejudice against trees." He then stalked off the ground followed by his A.D.C. I thought Cumberland would have thrown the whole thing up that day, he was so annoyed, but we took up the stakes and staked it out our way with the South front facing the South, and by a little stuffing and squeezing we got the tree into such a position that it may be saved but with the almost certainty that when it is blown down it will take some of the students' quarters with it. It is some comfort that that will occur before Tom[†] is old enough to go to college, or I should be uneasy in stormy nights. However I bless that tree and hope its shadow may never be less for it got us out of [the] scrape When the Governor paid us a visit next day he was quite satisfied and complimentary, and in congratulating us upon the safety of the tree he said to Cumberland with that impertinence which governors general can so well indulge in "For I am sure you can never put anything up half as pretty." That day I met John Macdonald in the street who said, "so I hear you have been cutting down the trees," and calling upon Lady Head that afternoon with the ladies she asked, "Did you save that tree?"—upon which a smile passed between her and the Aide. The Chief Justice of New Brunswick also, who was there on a visit, was present at the first indignation and suggested that the tree might perhaps be transplanted adding, "did not your Excellency transplant one almost as large at St. John?" The great man muttered something about a failure, from all which I conclude that if we Canadians have prejudices about trees our governors are not quite exempt from the same. This was pretty nearly the last of my troubles about the building. During these interviews and others on other subjects with the Governor I learnt a trick or two about great men. Of course it is very improper to argue with a governor general, but I was not bred a courtier and am somewhat inclined to argument. But I never do argue in presence of a third person, especially before Cumberland against whom it is clear the Governor has a great prejudice. He has often upbraided me for deserting him when we were agreed upon a point. But alone I have no such scruples. I stick to my point stiffly and often gain it, and if I find it prudent to appear convinced I generally can get it accomplished by returning to the subject next day in somewhat a different direction. Hitherto at any rate I have got everything I much cared about my own way except the removal of Upper Canada College on which he is inflexible. With all its endowment it is getting deeper into debt, but it stands on ground worth £50,000 at least, far too confined for its accommodation with proper playgrounds, etc, and on a main thoroughfare where you cannot keep the boys out of mischief; whilst we have ground in abundance in the University park and could put up far better buildings for the money and gain £1,000 a year besides, almost exactly central too to the space and not very far from the centre of the population of Toronto. But Upper Canada College lies almost at his door, and I suppose he thinks that the centre of the world whilst it is really at one corner.

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[*] Lieut.-Col. Frederick William Cumberland (1821-1881), civil engineer and architect

[†] The writer's eldest son.

You may easily imagine that all these things keep me pretty fully employed. Indeed since my appointment I think the University has taken up fully half my time and much more than half my thoughts. And all for what? For £200 a year you will say. But in two or three years at any rate I shall be moved away and have no further connection with them, even if I remain as long or the University itself continues in existence. Since Blake's resignation they have not been able to get anybody to take the Chancellorship and I am not surprised—at least no one whom they will appoint. Dr. McCaul has been moving heaven and earth to be appointed, and as he can play the courtier very well I should not be very much surprised if in the dearth of others he may succeed. That would effectually finish the University. In the meantime however the lawyers say that everything we do is illegal, as our corporation is incomplete and the Governor only verbally agrees to our Statutes and tells us to act on them but does not formally sanction them, intending that we shall pass one general statute including the whole when we have a chancellor. It is not a pleasant position to be in and many members of the Senate are beginning to talk of ceasing attendance altogether. Our contract for the building too is in a curious position. If the Senate does not exist surely it cannot contract, and our Solicitor had great objections to drawing up the contract and told me if I signed it he thought I should be personally liable. However I ran the risk and signed it and affixed the seal of the University, acting by the Chief Justice's advice who said that unless the seal is affixed by fraud no court would refuse to recognize it. Rumour says that we are to have no chancellor but that we are to be left as we are till Parliament meets when there will be a new Act. In any case there will be a new Act, which the Governor is now drawing up. It will restore us the management of our property and make us independent of the Government and reunite or draw closer the bonds between the College and the University. This is as it should be but can he carry it? He says he thinks he can depend upon Lower Canada for support but I doubt, and above all can he depend upon his Government which I doubt more. Once introduce the subject in Parliament and no one can tell how it will come out of it. The whole thing may be legislated away, and most probably I shall. It is disheartening, but what is a man to do. Every stone that goes up in the building, every book that is bought is so much more anchorage and so much less plunder to fight for. It is said so live as if you might die to-morrow, and in this case I try to do the converse to act as if we were to live for ever. If we survive it is so much gain, if we fall the good we do will not be thrown away altogether; there will probably be some remnant left to benefit by it, or some other man who will have an abuse the less to correct.

A NOTE ABOUT THE CLERGY RESERVES

THE CLERGY RESERVES

[In reply to a request from England for information as to how the Church of England in Canada managed without the Clergy Reserves.]

Ottawa, 29th Oct., 1869

When I was in politics this was a vexed question. Of course as a churchman I was willing enough to have any aid for the church, but in a country like Canada, where we have no established form of religion, where the Church of England is in a decided minority, it would have been manifestly unjust to have a public maintenance for it, and not for other denominations, and however stoutly we had fought for retaining this benefit, it would only have been a question of time and have raised all sorts of ill will amongst us.

I therefore went for the abolition of the Clergy Reserves, being certainly the only Church of England man in the House and nearly the only one in the country that did so. You may imagine that I had hard times of it with our people, without gaining much support from the other side. The arguments which had really convinced me—the injustice of the existing arrangement, and the impolicy of protracting a useless contest—had no weight with my friends, and being hard pressed I boldly argued that the Clergy Reserves, instead of being any real benefit, were a drag upon the progress of the Church of England, and that we should thrive twice as well without them. I well remember a

speech in the House in which I advanced this argument, and brought forward as an instance a township (Dummer) in my own county. About half of it was settled with Presbyterians (Scotch), the other half by Wiltshire men with a sprinkling of northern Irish, who were also for the most part churchmen. The Wiltshire men were very strenuous for having a clergyman sent to them, and argued, not without reason, that if the six-sevenths of the land which they occupied could support them, the other seventh reserved for the clergy ought to provide them with a parson; but not one of them ever dreamt of their paying anything themselves towards his support. From their childhood upward it had appeared to be in the immutable order of things that there should be a parson, and whilst the land was there why need they, who had hard work to live themselves, pay anything? The Scotch, having nothing else to depend on, soon subscribed to have a minister to visit them once a month and then once a fortnight, and finally built him a modest house and bad one all to themselves. Wandering Methodists also visited them from time to time, and the Irishmen mostly joined that sect; but the Wiltshire men were very stubborn, and never went to church at all. After a while however the young people had to get married, and there were children to be christened, and old people to be comforted in sickness and buried, and the Presbyterian minister being at hand they went to him, and ended in becoming regular attendants and subscribing with the rest of the congregation. If there had been no such nominal provision as the Clergy Reserves, I argued, these men would still have belonged to the church. Now you may imagine how satisfactory it was to find that within a year after the Clergy Reserves were secularized, the

JOHN LANGTON
AETAT 70

old Wiltshire men, finding they could no longer rely upon government for anything, and taking example from their Scotch neighbours, subscribed and built a very nice little church, and parsonage, and have now a resident clergyman amongst them. But the evil once done is not so easily undone. They have not got all their Wiltshiremen back from the Presbyterians, and very few of the Irish from the Methodists. But since 1860 the members of the Church of England have increased in numbers. I was told by our former clergyman at Fenelon Falls that in his new country parish near Toronto he had nearly doubled his congregation since the abolition of the Clergy Reserves, almost all the new accessions being old churchmen who for want of a regular church had got into the habit of going to the Methodists. After all the abuse which I got in 1854, much of it very hard personal abuse, I have lived to be thanked by more than one clergyman for aiding in conferring a great benefit on the Church. The fact is that there is no denomination so well able to support its clergy as ours, and none that did so little till we were thrown on our own resources. It has also had a wholesome effect on the clergy themselves The laity hold the purse strings, and cannot be altogether set aside as something profane. At a meeting of the Church Society at Quebec some of the parsons were explaining their experiences in extracting money from their congregations. One of them, recommending frequency of small contributions instead of larger sums occasionally, appealed to me, as having been a farmer, whether steady milking was not the best rule to follow I assented as to the milking, but added that I had found good and steady feeding quite as essential, which plan I strongly recommended the assembled parsons to try.

INDEX OF NAMES

Abercrombie, Sir Ralph, 128
Aberdeen, 61
Adelaide township, 14, 72, 73
Albany, 160
Athril *or* Atthill, —, 33, 50, 62, 145, 178, 190, 191, 192

Baby, —, 269
Badgley, William, 217
Bald lake, 38
Baldwin, Robert, 267, 277, 278, 279, 288
Baldwin, (Colonel), 48
Balsam Canal, 129
Balsam lake, 10, 13, 14, 66, 74, 142, 156, 176
Bank of Montreal, xxxviii
Bank of Upper Canada, xxxix, 98, 183, 240, 244
Barber, E. C., 232, 233
Barclay, (Dr. and Mrs.), 176
Beaston, —, 50
Beaven, James, 290, 291
Bedford, —, 22
Beehive, The, xv, 298
Begley, Thomas A., 270
Belfast, 50
Bellingham, —, 69
Bethune, —, 98, 100, 140
Bettridge, William, 142
Bick, George, 203
Bidwell, —, 162, 171
Birley, R., 139
Blake, William Hume, 265, 282, 283, 284, 285, 286, 287, 291, 292, 296
Blandford, 86
Blythe, xv, 129, 134, 143, 146, 154, 159, 164, 166, 173, 174, 175, 182, 183, 191, 194
Blythe Hall, xiii, xiv
Bob-ca-je-won-unk, 43, 56, 72, 74, 97, 102, 104, 108, 109. *See also* Bob Cajwin, Bob-cajion-unk *and* Bobcaygeon
Bob-cajion-unk, 29, 32, 38. *See also* Bobcajewonunk, Bob Cajwin *and* Bobcaygeon
Bob Cajwin, 8, 14, 17, 22, 24, 29. *See also* Bob-cajion-unk, Bobcajewonunk *and* Bobcaygeon
Bobcaygeon, xxviii, 32, 120, 144, 146, 152, 166, 175, 179, 181, 182, 204. *See also* Bobcajewonunk, Bob-cajion-unk *and* Bob Cajwin
Boston, 159, 160
Boswell, George M., 167
Botany Bay, xxvi
Bouchette, Robert Shore Milnes, 214
Boyce, —, 63
Boyd, Mossom, 152, 153, 203, 204, 207, 209
Bridgenorth, 21
Brock, 80
Brown, (Colonel) and family, 6, 36, 121, 133
Buckhorn lake, 14, 28, 38
Buckhorn rapids, 205, 206
Buffalo, xxxii
Burleigh rapids, 205
Burnt river, 13
Bury, William Coutts Keppel, Viscount, 213

Caddy, Edward, 104
Cambie, Charles, 231
Cambleton, 6, 21
Cambridge, xiv, xxxiii, 23
Cameron *or* Cameron's lake, 13, 23, 42, 69, 74, 128, 137, 177
Cameron's Falls, 8, 9, 10, 13, 18, 19, 24, 31, 42, 45, 49, 50, 56, 63, 64, 68, 72, 87, 102, 123, 127, 129, 137, 141, 144, 168. *See also* Fenelon Falls
Campbell, Sir John, 62
Campbellford, 6
Canada Company, xxvii, 73

Canadian Historical Review, v
Cartier, Sir George Etienne, 216, 251
Cartwright township, 48
Cary, Joseph, 214
Cauchon, Joseph Edouard, 216, 261, 263
Cayley, William, 213, 214, 215, 217, 218, 222, 226, 230, 237, 241, 247, 255, 257, 259, 262, 263, 264, 268, 269, 271, 273
Cedar Point, 45
Chaffey, Benjamin, 221
Chauveau, Pierre Joseph Olivier, 239
Chemong lake, 7, 10, 14, 17, 21, 105 *See also* Mud lake
Cobourg, 4, 5, 6, 14, 16, 20, 24, 50, 74, 96, 98, 99, 100, 101, 103, 164
Colborne, Sir John, xxvii, 11, 128, 129, 134, 160, 172
Colbourne district, 163, 163
Colonial Advocate, xxii, xxiv
Commercial Bank, 162
Constitution Island, 169, 175
Cork, xxxix, 62
Crane, Bill, 28
Crawford, (Miss), 50
Credit river, xxxi
Cruse, Thomas, 230, 231, 256, 272
Cumberland, Frederick William, 292, 294, 295
Cummings, —, 297
Currer, Alice, xv

Darcos *or* D'Arcos, —, 17, 50, 62, 69
Davidson, (Captain), 166
Dawson, —, 227
Deer Bay *or* lake, 38
Dennistoun, Robert, 137, 142, 144, 147, 155, 164, 166, 167, 174, 176, 178, 179, 180, 182, 181
Dennistoun, (Mrs), 178
Dickenson, William, 219, 225, 230, 242
Dobbs, (Captain), 63, 123, 127, 166
D'Olier, —, 182
Douro township, xxxix, 7, 104
Draper, William Henry, 292
Drummond, Lewis Thomas, 216
Dublin, 62
Dudley, —, 154
Duff, Grant, 50, 61
Dummer, Township of, 302
Dundas, 79
Dunsford, Hartley, 206
Dunsford, James Hartley, xv, 203
Dunsford, James Wicks, 203, 204, 206
Durham, Lord, xxvii
Durham, County of, 170

Elgin, 50
Elliot, Stephen, 8, 9, 10, 22
Emily township, 48
Erie Canal, 4
Erie, Lake, 14, 80
Erindale, xxxi
Evans, —, 50

Farmers Bank, 163
Fenelon, Township of, 18, 25, 21, 50, 63, 72, 75, 79, 87, 103, 116, 127, 134, 138, 178
Fenelon Falls, xv, 8, 72, 167, 174, 176, 178, 179, 188, 192, 303. *See also* Cameron's Falls
Ferguson, —, 93, 119, 120, 121
Fisher, Janet, 72, 176, 177
Fisher, (Judge), 177
Fitchett, Abraham, 106, 110, 116, 117
Five Nations Indians, 125. *See also* Mohawk Indians
Forbes, Robert Millar, 72
Fornert, James, 290
Fortune, J. B., 168
Fortune, Thomas, 168, 176
Fortye, —, 128
Foster, —, 176
Fraser *or* Frazer, (Mr or Mrs.), 50, 62, 104, 105, 153, 155, 166

Gilchrist, John, 167
Glasgow, 167
Glenelg, Lord, 195
Globe, 271
Glyn, Mills and Company, 216
Gordon, Robert, 48, 49, 52, 64, 131
Gore District, xxxix
Grand Trunk Railway Company, 219, 243, 257
Grant, W. L., xix, xxv, xxix, xxx, xxxii

Greene, —, 231
Grey, —, 115, 117
Griffin, —, 176, 177

Hackett, —, 156
Haig, —, 182
Hall, Basil, 7
Hall, —, 71, 120
Hamilton, xxxix, 26, 79
Hamilton, Gawin, 164, 167, 174, 176, 177, 182
Hamilton, Robert, 144, 155, 164
Hamilton, William, 144
Hamilton, (Major) and family, 128, 133, 136, 137, 138, 142, 143, 144, 146, 147, 153, 155, 168, 176, 177
Harvey township, 50, 126
Hay, (Lieutenant), 37, 38, 39, 40, 41, 42, 43, 50
Head, Sir Edmund Walker, xvi, 213, 256, 280
Head, Sir Francis Bond, 160, 162, 171, 172, 180, 183
Head, Lady, 295
Heywood, Sir Benjamin, xv, 179
Heywood, Messrs B., and Co., 179, 182, 191
Hincks, Sir Francis, 227, 252, 264, 266, 276
Hodgins, John George, 251, 252, 253
Howard, 6, 21
Howison, John, xix, xxiii, xxvi, xxxi, xxxv, xxxvii
Hudson river, 4
Hudson River and Oswego Canal, 160
Hudson's Bay Company, 155
Hughes, —, 66, 71
Hunter, Joseph, 16, 17, 18, 48, 50
Huron, County of, 213
Huron, Lake, 14

Illinois, 146

James, —, 128, 129
Jameson, Anna Brownell, xix, xxiv, xxix, xxx, xxxi, xxxii, xxxiii, xxxiv, xxxix
Jameson, Robert Sympson, xxxiv
Jameson, —, 6, 24, 43, 44, 45, 50, 54, 56, 57, 61, 62, 63, 69, 70, 72, 73, 80, 108, 109, 117, 123, 131, 133, 134, 136, 141, 144, 145, 153, 164, 166, 178, 179, 180, 181

Kawartha lakes, 4
Kennedy, W. P. M., xix
Killaly, Hamilton Hartley, 270
Kinashgingiquash, Lake, 35
King, John, 265, 280
King, —, 50
King's College, xxxi, xxxiii, 277, 278
Kingston, xxxv, xxxviii, 21, 168, 172, 173, 176, 213
Kirkpatrick, Sir George Airey, 168
Kirkpatrick, Stafford Frederick, 168, 169, 174, 176, 177
Kirkpatrick, Thomas, 168
Kirkpatrick, (Mrs. S. F.), 176, 177

Lakefield, 43
Langevin, —, 227
Langton, Anne, vi, ix, xiv, xv
Langton, Lydia, xv
Langton, Thomas, xiii, xiv, xv
Langton, William, v, xiii, xiv, xv, 68, 179, 182
Lecky, William Edward Hartpole, 266
Lemieux, François Xavier, 216, 270
Lennox and Addington, County of, 171, 177
Lisbon, 61
Liverpool, xiii, xiv, 3, 9, 11, 24, 50, 61, 72, 97, 113, 154, 159
London, 101, 190
London (Canada West), xxxix
London District, 66
Londonderry, 62
Long Island, 160

McAndrew, Alexander, 17, 18, 19, 27, 29, 32, 33, 43, 44, 45, 46, 47, 48, 49, 50, 51, 56, 57, 58, 59, 60, 61, 64, 65, 67, 68, 69, 70, 76, 82, 83, 84, 93, 94, 95, 97, 105, 106, 107, 108, 109, 116, 118, 123, 127, 128, 133, 134, 137, 138, 139, 140, 143, 144, 145, 146, 147, 148, 150, 153, 154, 155, 156, 178, 180, 182

McCall, —, 69, 71, 76, 79, 80, 83, 84, 94, 98, 99, 105, 107, 109, 129, 145
McCaul, John, 265, 276, 280, 284, 285, 286, 288, 290, 291, 293, 296
McConnell, —, 46, 174, 175
McCue. *See* McQue
Macdonald, Sir John Alexander, 213, 216, 217, 248, 257, 259, 263, 271, 295
McDonell, Alexander, 16, 37, 78, 121, 137, 168, 170, 173
McGregor, John, xix
McGue. *See* McQue
McInnes, —, 117
Mackenzie, William Lyon, xxii, xxiv, 101, 162, 167, 170, 214, 250
McKue, Billy, 17
Maclaren, (Major), 72, 185
MacMullen, John, xix
McNab, Sir Allan Napier, 256, 257, 258, 259, 260
McQue, Billy, 36, 105, 118, 122
McQue, James, 17, 22, 33
Macredie, Thomas, 137, 144, 145, 153, 154, 156, 164, 165, 167, 171
Macredie, William A., 69, 70, 71, 76, 78, 79, 83, 84, 92, 94, 97, 98, 102, 107, 108, 109, 114, 115, 117, 118, 129, 133, 134, 137, 144, 145, 148, 153, 154, 156, 164, 165
Magrath, T. W., xix, xxii, xxxi
Manchester, xv, 11, 103
Manchester and Salford Bank, xv
Mariposa township, 80
Mavor, James, xix, xxii, xxiv
Meilleur, Jean Baptiste, 239, 252
Menzies, John, 142, 164, 185, 188
Merino, 72
Mersey river, 97
Michigan, xxv, 193
Miles, Robert S., 155
Mississauga Indians, 78, 125
Mohawk Indians, 23, 124, 125, 126
Montreal, xxii, xxxv, 14, 61, 65, 72, 75, 76, 101, 138, 202, 218, 221
Moore, 66
Morison, John, 50, 61
Morris, William, 215
Morrison, Joseph Curran, 257, 263, 269
Mud lake, 7, 21, 27, 43, 137, 167, 176. *See also* Chemong lake
Mudge, —, 37, 38, 50

Need, Thomas, 8, 10, 14, 18, 19, 32, 34, 36, 43, 46, 49, 50, 57, 82, 108, 109, 126, 129, 133, 134, 144, 145, 152, 153, 176, 179, 180, 182, 190
Newcastle District, 4, 5, 11, 12, 14, 35, 66, 99, 130
New York, 3, 4, 154, 159, 160, 180, 182
Niagara *and* Niagara Falls, xxxi, 3, 24, 26, 76, 79, 80, 82, 172
Nicholls, —, 202, 208
Nogy, *Captain*, 22, 28

O'Flynn, Daniel, 46, 47, 49, 80
Ohio, xxxi, 75, 80
Oliphant, Laurence, 213
Ontario, Lake, 14, 24, 79, 98, 120
Ops township, 8, 14, 47, 48, 57, 109, 153
Ormskirk (Lancashire), xiii
Oswego, 4, 130
Otonabee river, 5, 21, 25, 128, 168, 170
Ottawa, 301
Oxford, xxxiii, 62

Parr, —, 94
Patterson, James, 232
Perry, Peter, 162, 170
Pestalozzi, Heinrich, xiv
Peterborough, vi, ix, xv, xvi, xxxiv, xxxix, 4, 5, 6, 7, 11, 14, 17, 19, 21, 24, 25, 26, 28, 29, 33, 34, 36, 38, 39, 43, 49, 50, 51, 52, 55, 56, 57, 60, 62, 64, 70, 71, 72, 75, 82, 85, 96, 98, 99, 104, 105, 107, 109, 118, 119, 120, 121, 128, 130, 131, 132, 133, 136, 137, 138, 140, 141, 142, 144, 146, 147, 150, 155, 160, 163, 164, 166, 167, 168, 169, 170, 172, 173, 175, 177, 180, 181, 182, 183, 191, 193, 202, 203, 205, 206, 207, 209

Peterborough, County of, xvi
Peterborough Gazette, 203
Philadelphia, 159
Pickering, 30
Pigeon creek, 48
Pigeon lake, 8, 14, 17, 22, 32, 104, 105
Plains, The, xxxix, 128
Port Hope, 74
Port Hope Canal, 74, 78
Prescott, xxxv
Providence, 160
Purdon, (Captain), 166
Purdy, —, 48, 70, 81, 82, 88, 107, 147, 181

Quebec, xxii, xxvii, 152, 202, 203, 207, 209, 213, 216, 303
Quinté, Bay of, 14, 21

Rehridge, —, 156
Reilly, —, 117
Rice lake, 4, 5, 14, 21, 24, 74, 88, 168, 170
Richards, Sir William Buell, 237
Rideau Canal, xxiv, xxxviii
Ridout, —, 255
Riga, xiii
Rivière du Loup, 218
Robinson, Sir John Beverley, xxix, xxxiii
Robinson, Peter, xxxix, 169, 172
Rochester, 77, 79
Rokeby, 32, 46, 166
Rose, John, 257
Royal Standard, xxxii
Ruttan, Henry, 167, 170
Ryerson, Egerton, 223, 226, 227, 239, 242, 248, 250, 251, 252, 253, 254, 255, 265, 266, 270, 271, 283

St Albans, 92
St. Catharines, xxxix
St Lawrence river, 80, 218
Sandy lake, 14, 37, 48
Sandy Point, 45
Sawbridge, —, 172
Sawers, (Captain), 8, 10, 17, 29, 38, 39, 50, 62, 104, 145, 174
Schenectady, 160
Scott, Adam, xxxix, 128
Scott's Plains, *See* Plains, The
Scugog lake, 181
Scugog river, 8, 35, 47, 48, 70, 80, 97, 119
Selby, 43
Shairp, (Major), 133
Shaw, —, 168, 169
Shirreff, Patrick, xix, xxviii, xxxviii, xxxix, xl, 146
Simcoe, Lake, 13, 14, 19, 74, 129, 131, 154
Smith, Sir Henry, 258
Smith William, 15
Smith, —, 126
Spence, Robert, 242, 259
Spoke Island, 169
Spragge, —, 227
Stewart, Frances, xix, xxx, xxxix, xl, 7, 17
Stewart, Thomas Alexander, 8, 7, 160, 164, 176
Strachan, John, xxxiii, 178, 182, 277
Stuart, (Captain), 88
Stuart, *Mr* *See* Stewart, Thomas Alexander
Sturgeon lake, xv, xxvii, xxxiv, 4, 8, 14, 22, 25, 27, 32, 56, 74, 103, 104, 145, 152, 203
Sturgeon Point, 18, 19, 31, 87, 152
Sully, 21, 167, 188, 169, 178
Sydenham, Lord, 270

Taché, Sir Etienne Pascal, 218, 259, 280
Talbot river, 129
Tarbutt, —, 144
Thompson, Samuel, xix, xxx
Toronto, xvi, xxx, xxxi, xxxii, xxxiii, xxxiv, xxxix, 4, 94, 96, 97, 98, 99, 101, 103, 107, 137, 166, 173, 192, 215, 217, 230, 242, 277, 280, 282, 284, 296, 303. *See also* York
Toronto, University of, xvi, xxxiii 277-297 *passim*
Traill, Catherine Parr, xix, xxvi, xxxv, xxxvi, xxxvii, xxxix, xl
Traill, (Lieutenant), xxxv, xxxvi
Trent river, 14, 21, 209
Trent Valley Canal, xxv, 11, 74, 128, 181, 182

Trinity College, 278
Troy, 4
Tupper, —, 28

U E Loyalists, xxv, xxix, 15, 228
University College, 277-297 *passim*
Upper Canada College, xxxiii, 278, 287, 288, 295, 296

Uraguadire, 125
Uxbridge, 80

Vankoughnet, Philip Michael, 259
Vansittart, Henry, xxxiii, 142, 158
Verulam, 4, 19, 22, 26, 32, 50, 68, 126, 134
Victoria, County of, xvi, 203

Wade, (Rev Mr.), 191, 192, 194
Wallace, W Stewart, v, xix, xxx
Wallis, James, 69, 71, 72, 78, 79, 80, 96, 134, 138, 184, 165, 166, 167, 168, 169, 172, 174, 176, 177, 178, 179, 182, 188, 189, 190, 191, 192
Walsh, (General), 89
Wark, —, 119, 120, 131
Warren, (Captain), 50, 82
Waterloo, xiv, 184
Welland Canal, xxiv, xxxix
West Bay, 13
Whitby, 94. *See also* Windsor
Wilson, Alexander, xxxi
Wilson, Sir Daniel, 285, 289, 290
Wilson, —, 82, 69, 93
Windsor, 80, 181. *See also* Whitby
Woodstock, xxxiii, 156
Woolwich, 22

York, xxvii, xxviii, xxxii, xxxviii, 4, 6, 11, 14, 26, 68, 73, 80, 98, 119. *See also* Toronto
Young, John, 247
Yverdon, xlv

140

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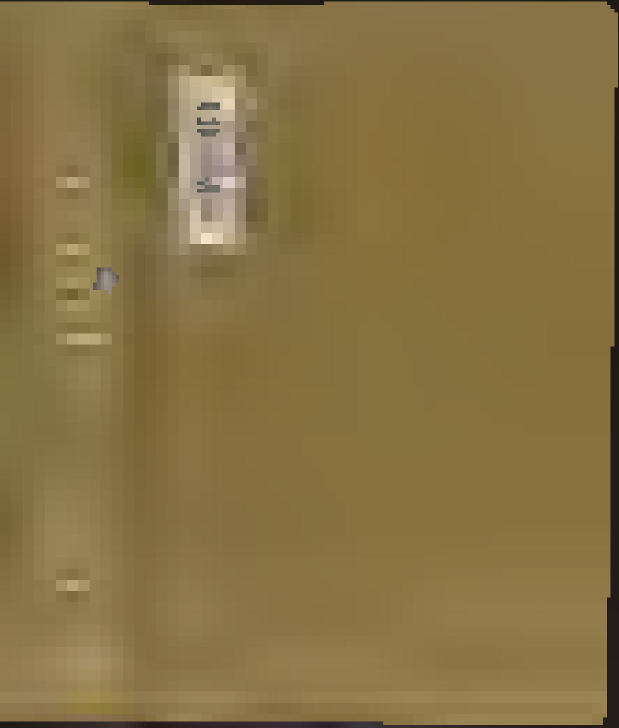

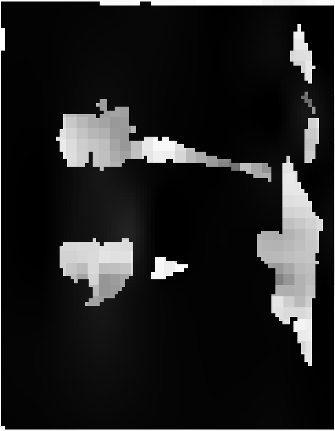

EARLY DAYS IN UPPER CANADA

LETTERS OF JOHN LANGTON

from the Backwoods of Upper Canada and the Audit Office of the Province of Canada

EDITED BY W. A. LANGTON

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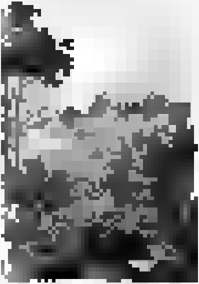

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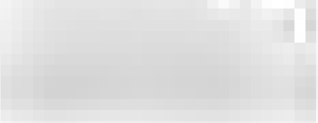

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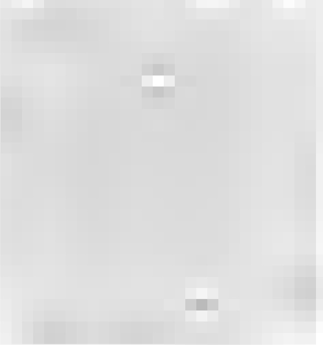

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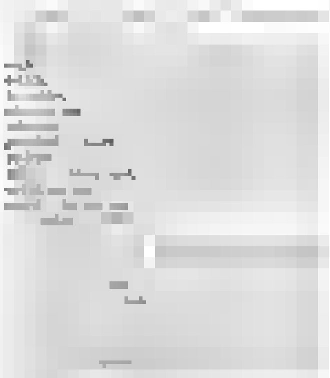

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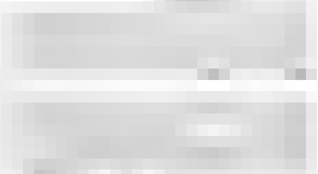

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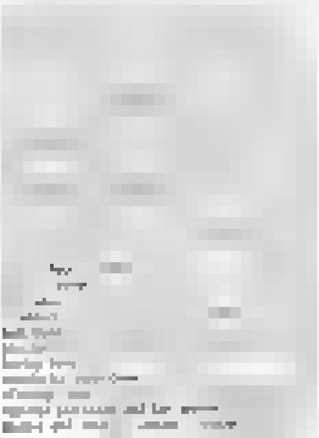

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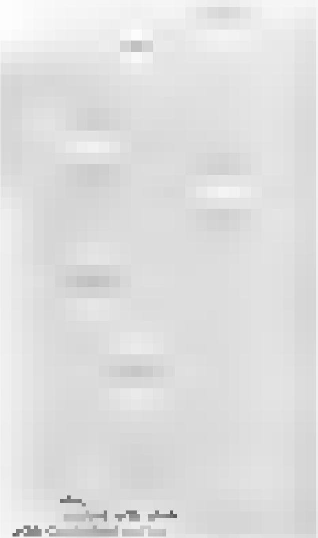

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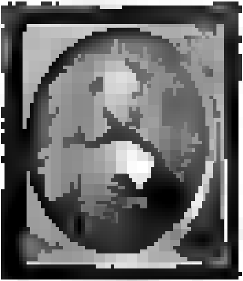

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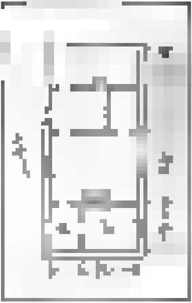

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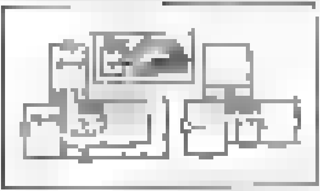

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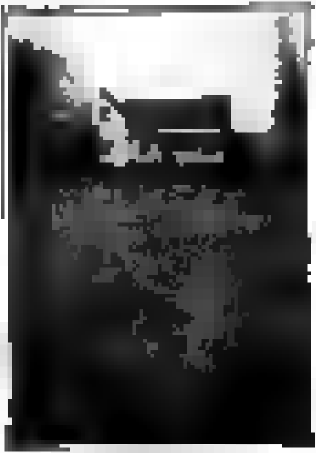

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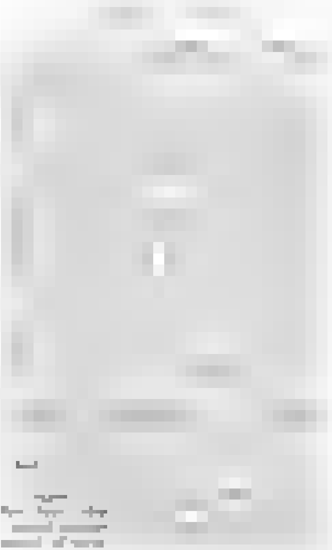

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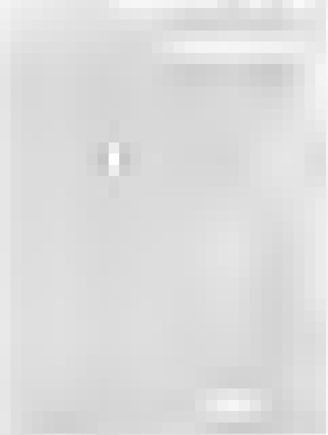

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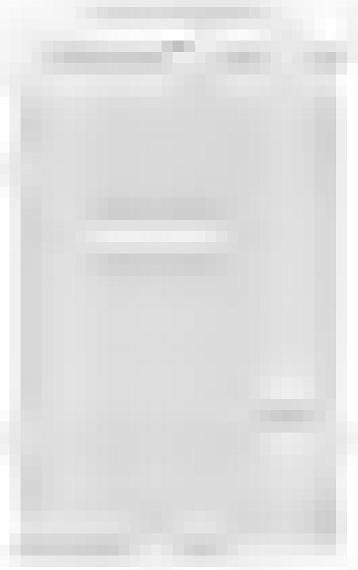

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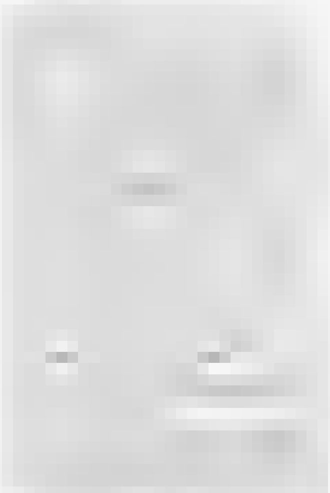

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